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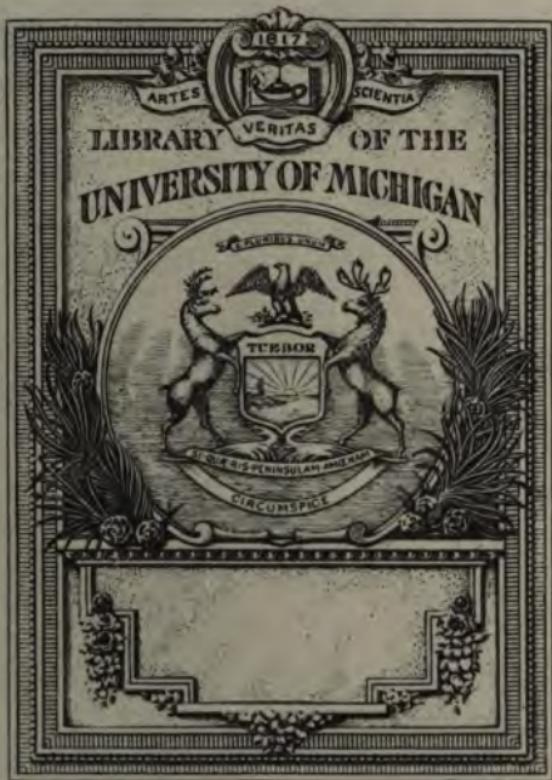
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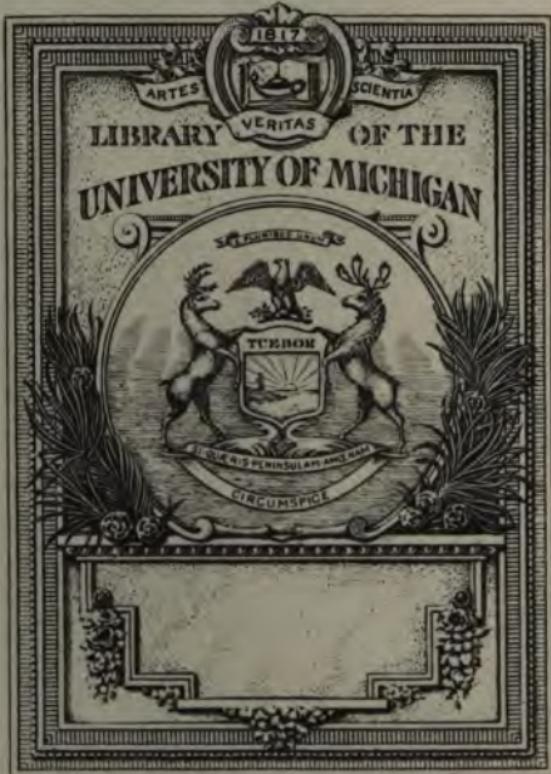
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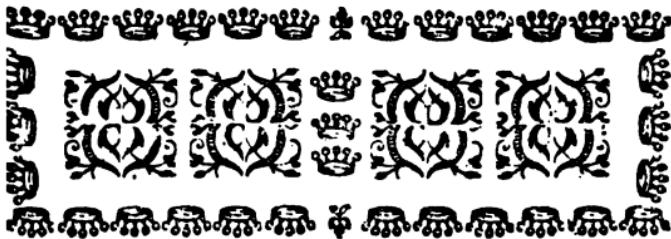






THE
THEORY
OF
Agreeable Sensations.

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P R E F A C E

*English
Sander
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B Y

Mr V E R N E T, Author of the
Treatise on the Truth of the
Christian Religion.



HE first sketch of this
work was no more than
a letter to my Lord
Bolin——, which
was published without
the author's knowledge, in a collection
of select pieces printed at Paris in
1736. Some time after, a man of
letters,

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letters, who, for his amusement, had a small printing-house at his country-seat, thought proper to oblige his friends with an elegant edition of this small work in octavo. Upon this the author, who looked upon it at as a rude and imperfect draught, never intended to set the light, was solicited to explain and enlarge his thoughts. This he has done in the theory with which we now present the world. The design of it is, to discover the source and genuine standard of our several inclinations, pleasures, and duties, by which means we obtain, as it were, the key to the whole system of humanity and morals. God having endowed man with several faculties, as well corporeal as intellectual, in order to promote his happiness, also vouchsafed to conduct him to this noble end,

not only by the deductions of reason, but also by the force of instinct and sensation, a still more efficacious principle. Thus nature, by a sensation of pain, instantaneously apprises us of what might prove hurtful to us ; and on the contrary, by an agreeable sensation, gently leads us to whatever may tend to the preservation of our beings, and the perfection or good state of our faculties, which are the two points on which our happiness depends. These things have already been observed by several modern philosophers, but our author not satisfied with this, traces and particularises these observations in the following manner. Our faculties can neither be of use, nor display themselves, farther than we exercise them ; motion or action is therefore so necessi-

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to us, that without it we must inevitably sink into a deplorable state of insensibility and languor. On the other hand, as we are weak and limited creatures, all excessive and violent action would impair and destroy our organs ; we must therefore only use a moderate motion or exercise, since, by this means, the use or perfection of our faculties is reconciled with our first interest, which is that of self-preservation. Now 'tis to this happy medium, I mean to a moderate exercise of our faculties, that the author of our nature has so wisely annexed pleasure.

Our author having established this principle, considers the various pleasures of the senses, those of the understanding, and those of the heart.

He

P R E F A C E. ix

He also distinctly accounts for every thing that is esteemed beautiful and agreeable in the works of nature and art, in countenances, in colours, in sounds, in the figure, proportion, symmetry, variety, and novelty of objects, in the tastes of every age, in language and style, in the sciences, in the passions, in the motions of the soul, and, in a word, in every thing which is of a moral and physical nature, or which is conducive to the real advantage of man.

By these steps we easily ascend to a first intelligent and beneficent cause, who has established this beautiful harmony, and given us precisely that degree of sensibility, which, considering every thing, was best suited to our wants and necessities, whatever has

P R E F A C E.

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has been advanced to the contrary by Mr Bayle, whose system is here refuted.

Our philosopher, always animated by the noblest and most worthy views, makes it his particular business to shew, that man finds his happiness in the practice of the several duties he owes to God, his neighbour, and himself. Not content to stop here, he, by reasoning on the goods and evils annexed to every condition, shews the pre-eminence of intellectual goods, and the advantages which every one may reap from a proper use of his faculties, in order to render life agreeable, and contribute to the public good, by an uninterrupted series of rational occupations.

This

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his short analysis is sufficient to incite the reader, that the present book contains the true principles of natural theology, of morality, of eloquence, and of taste, both with respect to the liberal arts and works of wit and humor. He will here, in a particular manner, learn the principle of wisdom, the great art of rendering ourselves as happy as the nature of our present condition will permit us to be.



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T H E



THE
THEORY
OF
Agreeable Sensations.

CHAP. I.

There is a science of sensations as certain, and more important, than any other science in nature.



HERE have been philosophers, who by their observations have learned from nature some of those rules which she has prescribed to herself in the distribution of motion; and the ex-
B plication

2 *The Theory of*
plication of these laws forms a
science, accompanied with the same
evidence as geometry. Can what
passes in bodies be an object a-
dapted to the knowledge of the
human mind? and can thick dark-
ness conceal from it those chan-
ges to which it finds itself subject-
ed? "Tis true, indeed, the diffe-
rent degrees of motion may be ex-
pressed by numbers, and they fur-
nish matter for geometrical calcula-
tions: but tho' our sensations will
not admit of an exact measure, yet
surely we discern them too clearly,
not to be able to trace what gave
rise to them, to perceive what ac-
companies them, and to foresee the
.consequences which will follow. In
the theory of motion, with a com-
pass in our hand, if I may use the
expression,

expression, we travel thro' the immensity of space and time; but in the more confined circle of our inquiry into sensations, we must not expect the road will be pointed out so plainly; nevertheless it will be equally sure, if we take care to be guided only by indisputable facts, and distinct ideas.

Certainty alone is not sufficient to make our knowledge valuable; it is the importance of our knowledge which gives a value to it. Now surely there is none which more nearly concerns us, than that which has for its object, the very object of all our desires. I am sensible, that an inquiry which is to entertain us only with abstract ideas, will less concern us than that which promises us agreeable sensations.

but it is not to the imagination that I propose to speak concerning pleasure: what I aim at, is to explain the nature of pleasure, without so much as attempting to convey it: These laws which regulate the rise of pleasure, not a little resemble the source of the river Nile, which so enriches Egypt. We may be ignorant of these laws, and at the same time enjoy their benefits. If we have any curiosity to come at a knowledge of them, we cannot attain this, without travelling thro' some places which are solitary and unfrequented. However, I am persuaded that those who will pursue such an undertaking, will find a degree of pleasure even in their own reflections. Do we not enjoy nature, when we perceive her beauty?

ty? The theory of sensation not only presents us with an object worthy of our highest attention, but likewise furnishes us with the principles of arts which still more concern us. Our most excellent poets, orators, and painters, have not been always actuated by the impulse of instinct ; they have oftentimes been guided in their performances by deep and refined reflections upon what was capable of affording pleasure to the mind ; they have as it were imprinted them in their works ; and these being collected, have formed the theory of poesy, oratory, and painting. All these speculations are as so many disjointed parts, to which the theory of sensation is intitled to claim a right.

Amongst all arts, there is surely none more interesting than that of procuring happiness : and there is no other whose fundamental principle has given rise to a greater variety of opinions. Varro has reckoned up almost three hundred. However, it is upon this principle that the whole of moral philosophy is built. In order to obtain a clear idea of which, we must go up as far as the laws of sensation, we must draw nigh to them, and allow ourselves to be conducted by a thread of consequences. In Plato's dialogue upon a republic, or rather upon internal justice, some of his dialogists complain, that law-givers and philosophers, in order to incite us to virtue, mention no other motive as an inducement, but the

the consideration of those advantages which flow from it ; therefore they require of Socrates to prove to them, that virtue, by her own native charms, constitutes the happiness of those who have her in their possession ; this he does by a long comparison betwixt the different forms of government, and that inward republic, which is formed within us by our reason and passions.

This doctrine of the Platonic school may, as I apprehend, be very clearly established by the theory of sensations. Let us thoroughly examine this point, and we shall soon come at the principles of a most exact system of morality. It may very justly be said against Epicurus, that he has only flattered

our desires, and promised us an imperfect happiness, and that he was far from having a just idea of the value and extent of mental pleasures. We acknowledge that an observance of the laws which our Creator has prescribed, is the surest way to keep off uneasiness and anxiety, and to lay up in our minds a stock of the most valuable sensations.

There are Christians who imagine, that the gospel condemns virtue to be unhappy in this life. The law of God, which, as it is set forth in the sacred writings, has of itself so many enticements, is to such persons an insupportable yoke. Were they to be once freed from that slavish dread with which they are fettered, then they would run out

out into the most enormous crimes. They are equally tortured by vice, which has the mastery of them, as they are by the fear of punishment, which frightens them. It is not so with those in whose hearts * perfect love casteth out fear; they perceive no rigour in the gospel, or the prophets; we are only commanded, according to Christ's own expression, to love God and our neighbour. And what is there in this that our reason can contradict; ought not our heart to go along with us, in being benevolent to our fellow-creatures, or in submitting to the decrees of a being of infinite wisdom?

In the order of nature, an exercise that's agreeable to our facul-

* 1 John iv. 18.

10 *The Theory of*

ties is always attended with pleasing sensations. This source of lawful pleasures is open no less to the Christian than the infidel. But in the order of grace, the Christian enjoys more happiness by what he hopes for, than by what he actually possesses. Rais'd on high upon the wings of faith, into the bosom of God himself, there he beholds an ever-flowing stream of delights ; and when from this immense height he looks down upon the present advantages and misfortunes of this world, he perceives the only design or use of them to be, in order to facilitate the acquisition of that everlasting happiness which is offered. The theory of sensations does not go so high ; it is only a branch of natural philosophy, tho'

one

is one of the most important. It displays to us the wisdom and goodness of our Creator ; it assigns to the goods of this life, the proper class in which each of them is worthy to be placed ; it supports most of the gospel-maxims, contradicts none of them, and invites us to the practice of them, by shewing that there is, even in this life, a real pleasure which accompanies the performance of our duty towards God, towards ourselves, and towards our fellow-creatures. The more important this point is, the less susceptible it is of shining discoveries. What can be said new upon a subject, which ever since the origin of mankind, has been the perpetual object of the desires of the heart, and the reflections

12 *The Theory of*
tions of the mind? In this production
there will be nothing new, except
the union of some ideas scattered in
different authors, and these, when
joined in a proper order, will form
a regular work.



C H A P

C H A P. II.

*There is an agreeable sensation, which
accompanies whatever exercises
the organs of the body, without
weakening them.*

THESE are some animated beings which seem to be sufficient in themselves. In the very spot where they are placed, they find every thing necessary for their preservation and growth. It is not so with man: there is no bounds to the immensity of his desires. We may very justly apply to him, what Plato has said of love: The goddess of want, and the god of riches, seem to have been equally concerned in his formation. H

is overwhelmed with wants, to supply which, all nature seems hardly sufficient ; at the same time he is enriched with variety of organs, which enable him to approach the most distant objects, to distinguish them, to lay hold of them, and to make use of them. Whatever causes a moderate exercise to these organs, is accompanied with an agreeable sensation. That restless disposition which we observe in children, shews us what a pleasing thing motion must be to them. Amongst youth, dancing and hunting are the amusements which are most followed ; and the more brisk and lively these diversions are, the more agreeable are they to them. Even old people, in whom age has blunted

ed every other sort of sensation, are pleased with moderate exercise.

M. Pascal has imagined, that the fondness which men shew for all sorts of diversions and exercisés, arises from a desire which they have to shun themselves, or avoid their own company: but, in my opinion, it proceeds from that pleasure which accompanies the exercise of our different faculties; and tho' this pleasure may make but a very little impression, it is not for that reason the less real. Is it not a very common thing to see women, in order to drive away melancholy, employ themselves in some slight work, by which they propose no other advantage but the amusement?

The principle of this pleasure consists in the exercise of the organs of transpiration; as is evident from the observations of Sanctarius. There are certain vapours, not to be seen by our eyes, which are continually exhaled thro' the pores of the skin: Were these to remain too long in the blood, they would soon give a shock to our health. Besides, the want of exercise, or immoderate exercise, equally diminish this invisible exhalation. On the other hand, an exercise that is suited to our strength, very much contributes to our health.

"Tis likewise owing to this motion of the organs of transpiration, that the warmth of a fire is so agreeable to us in winter, and the cooling breezes so refreshing in summer;

summer ; and whatever promotes the circulation of the blood, gives a grateful pleasure.. When we survey an object, the colours distinguish it to our eyes. Some of them are dull and melancholy; but the greatest part are agreeable. The experiments of Sir. Isaac Newton, sufficiently shew us the reasons of this difference. These rays which have the greatest force, make the most agreeable impression, but their shining colours very soon tire the eye. Those which form a green, having but a moderate motion, are therefore capable of exercising the fibres of the eye, without weakening them. The brown and dark colours carry in them the image of sadness, because they leave the eyes in a state of inaction..

Whatever agreeably strikes the sight with its colours, becomes still more pleasing, by the greatness or variety of its parts. The vast extent of the ocean, the rivers which precipitate themselves from the high mountains into the low vallies, the fields which present to our view the most charming landscapes ; all these objects are agreeable, in proportion to the grandeur and variety of the images which are painted in the retina of the eye. It is the very same with hearing, as it is with seeing. We know by the observations which have been made by the moderns, that the tympanum of the ear is composed of an infinite number of nervous chords, each of which has a particular spring. A sound is agreeable, in proportion as it

it affects a greater number of these fibres, with motions which have the nearest resemblance, and are oftenest united. On the contrary, a noise becomes troublesome to the ear, when the fibres clash and offend each other by the discord of their motions. Variety likewise adds pleasure to sounds : the most agreeable cease to be so, and become tiresome, when the action has been too long repeated upon the same fibres.

M. de la Motte imagined, that words could in no ways be agreeable, but by the ideas which they conveyed to the mind. But must we give up our own inward experience, and that of all mankind, on purpose to rely upon his authority ? There are not only sounds

whic

which, of themselves, touch the fibres of the ear with pleasure, and others which tire them, but likewise the organs of speech are associated with those of the ear, and the nerves by which they are connected, render their interest one and the same ; thus we cannot with pleasure hear those sounds which are pronounced with pain.

The agreement of tastes and smells is in the same manner as wisely adapted to our necessities, as that of colours and sounds. The sharp and pungent salts, if conveyed into the body in respiration or digestion, would produce diseases ; and for this reason, they discover their malignant quality, by the violence of their impression upon the nervous papillæ,

papillæ, which constitute the seats of tasting and smelling.

The medicines which physicians prescribe by way of cure, have frequently sinells that are very disagreeable; yet let us not be surprised at this. Health consists in the just proportion of those salts, sulphurs, and other principles which compose our fluids: if any of them becomes predominant, or too much weakened, then sickness ensues; and in order to restore the equal balance, we are frequently obliged to have recourse to a remedy, which, to a man in health, would prove a flow poifon.

But there are certain universal medicines prescribed to us by the hand of nature, which are necessary in all distempers, and almost sufficient.

The Theory of
sufficient to cure them ; these are, a proper regimen, and the use of liquors capable of diluting, cooling, and restoring the natural state of the blood. When we stand in need of such remedies, our taste prefers them to those aliments which would fatigue the organs of digestion, and produce pernicious juices.

That law which governs the impressions made upon the organs of the senses, likewise extends to the organs of perspiration. If the spring of the air, from which they derive their force, is weakened by scorching heat, then they fall into a languishing state, which we feel very sensibly ; and a fresh breeze again restores them to their wonted activity, and we are highly delighted.

By

By these observations we perceive, that there are two sorts of agreeable sensations; some of which, such as the pleasure we take in dancing, hunting, &c. appear to proceed from the commands of the will, and seem in a manner to spring from the bosom of our faculties; these preserve the name of pleasing sensations. The others, which we call agreeable, are formed by the impression or idea of beings which are foreign to ourselves. The soul then seems to launch beyond herself, in order to become acquainted with the amiable qualities of things presented to her view. Each of these sorts of sensation, feel equally whatever exercises our organs without fatiguing them.

C H A P. III.

There is an agreeable sensation, which accompanies whatever exercises the mind, without fatiguing it.

EXercise of the mind is as necessary as that of the body, to preserve our existence. The senses of other animals being more quick than ours, are sufficient to direct them to whatever is agreeable to their nature, or to shun whatever is contrary thereunto: but we are endowed with a mind to supply the deficiency of our senses, and pleasure presents herself in order to incite the mind to a proper exercise, and keep her from falling into a state of fatal inactivity. Pleasure,

sure, which is the parent of diversions and amusements, is likewise the source of sciences and arts: the whole universe is forced by our industry to pay tribute to our wants and desires; at the same time, we cannot but acknowledge our obligation to the law of nature, which has annexed a degree of pleasure to whatever exercises, without fatiguing the mind.

There have been some men, and those called philosophers too, who have maintained, that the exercise of the mind was in no other ways agreeable, but by our having in view the fame and reputation which it was likely we should gain thereby. But is not our own inward reflection sufficient to convince us, that we are often en-

gaged in reading and contemplation, without any future prospect, without any other design than that of passing agreeably the present hours. This exercise of the mind is so charming, that it sometimes transports the soul to such a degree, that she seems to have disengaged herself from the body.. Every one knows what has been recorded in history concerning Archimedes, and several other both ancient and modern geometricians. If we doubt the truth of these facts, let us at least acknowledge the possibility of them, since every day we meet with such a number of similar examples. When we see a chess-player so much wrapp'd up in his own thoughts, as to be insensible to what strikes upon his eyes or ears,

ears, might we not then imagine him to be wholly taken up with his own fortune, or the good of the state? Yet all this profound thought is only taken up with the pleasure of exercising the mind, which is procured by the proper placing of a piece of ivory.

"Tis owing to this exercise of the mind, that we feel a pleasure arising from ironical satires, and satirical encomiums; hence too we are delighted with delicate thoughts which gently bring to light a sentiment that's hidden in the recesses of the heart. In short, it is owing to the same cause, that we are pleased with all those shining expressions, which convey to us a just sense, notwithstanding there appear to be an inconsistency.

terms. If we design only to instruct, then our style cannot be too clear; but if our intention is to please, then we may gratify the mind with an opportunity of exercising her penetration. The idea which we have a mind to convey, will acquire a new degree of excellence, if after the manner of Virgil's Shepherdess, there be some pains taken to conceal it, in order to afford the greater pleasure when it is discovered.

Order, symmetry, and proportion are agreeable, because they render it easy for the mind to comprehend, and retain the different parts of an object.

One of our poets has attempted to banish from our poetry all harmony of sound, and to confine it entire-

entirely to acrostics, and other trifling works, all the merit of which is placed in their difficulty. He has not recollect'd that verses are intended to be sung, or spoke in public. They are delivered by an actor, or a musician, and by this means communicated to a whole people; therefore it is necessary they should be formed in such a manner, that they may be easily imprinted on the memory. The versification of the Greeks and Romans, by a regular disposition of long and short syllables, was sufficient to render them easily retainable by the memory; but in our language, the almost equal length of all the syllables, seems to have obliged the poets to have recourse to rhyme.

M. de la Motte observing that, by the laws of nature, a repetition of the same sounds is agreeable in poetry, asks how it happens, that the very same thing should be so highly offensive in music? 'Tis because the principal end of music is to charm by sounds, and in this the musician cannot better succeed; than by variety; whereas the business of a poet is not confined to the pleasing of the ear alone, but he likewise aims at imprinting on the memory of his hearer a train of ideas and expressions. The design and scope of all his poetry is, to make a strong and indelible impression; accordingly, in most of the living languages, we find that rhyme has been made

made use of as the best expedient to carry this design into execution.

However, let us not be so far blindly prejudiced in favour of our own verification, as not to allow, that by the continual uniformity of its sound, it is greatly inferior to that of the Greeks and Romans.

Imitation by colours, sounds, gestures, or discourse, has the same advantage as symmetry or proportion. It presents to our view objects which the imagination can easily comprehend, by the comparison which is made with those already known to us.

If we believe what Aristotle says, the representation of an object is agreeable for this reason only, because the mind by comparing it with the original, and inquiring into the just

justness of the picture, acquires by this means a degree of knowledge. But is not the same sort of acquisition made when we spy out the imperfections of an unjust representation ? If this observation was to hold good, the works of all painters, poets, orators, and musicians, notwithstanding there might be ever so great a difference in the execution, would give an equal degree of pleasure. Imitation, according to other philosophers, pleases only as it affects the passions ; it is certain, indeed, that it derives from thence its most powerful charms ; but still we must allow, that any object, tho' ever so little interesting, will touch the soul with some degree of pleasure, provided it be expressed with truth, and :

and there be an exact resemblance betwixt the picture and the original. When all the parts of a whole are formed, and ranged in such a disposition, that the mind can with ease take in and retain the idea, then it cannot fail to be agreeable.

Contrast is no less easy to be comprehended by the imagination than resemblance. It makes opposite objects to approach each other. It brings to light the characteristics of one, by comparing them with those of another. Hence we see, that the antient sculptors, in order to heighten the beauty of a Venus, or one of the Graces, have enclosed it in the hollow statue of a Satyr; Virgil has made use of the like piece of ingenuity; and in order to paint, in the most lively

hours, the perturbation of Dido's breast, he places the picture in that of a night, wherein the most profound rest reigned thro' the whole face of nature.

But if contrast and resemblance have the same advantage, it may be asked, whether they may be used indifferently? No, certainly they cannot. Contrast is very successfully made use of, in poems, pictures, and other works, wherein the parts are intended to be seen in succession; whereas in those which are designed to be taken in at one view, such as the front of a building, proportion ought to prevail in all the correspondent parts: the sight could not but be offended at a disparity, the reason of which could not appear to the mind.

mind. There are still more proportions than those of equality or opposition, which are easy for the comprehension; and they are very successfully made use of in the finest arts. Thus the height of porticos in regular buildings is double to their width, the height of the entablature is the fourth of that of the column; and the third of it serves for the height of the pedestal. All great architects among the different proportions compatible with the principal design of their works, have always fixed upon those which the mind could most easily comprehend.

As it is with the architect, so is it likewise with the musician. Numbers which are easily compared, are those which best express the harmony

*The Theory of
monious agreement of his compo-
sition ; and the most pleasing sounds
are those which convey to the soul
the greatest exercise, with the least
fatigue.*

There are bold and elevated pieces of music; these only please the nicest connoisseurs in that science. By their exquisite taste they can, with the greatest ease, discern, amongst sounds seeming to disagree, a relation which escapes ears that are less refined.

Among all the different proportions, there is none which affords a more pleasing contemplation to the mind, than that perfect agreement of all the parts of a work, with the ultimate end proposed therein. This is the chief of all the beauties; it is this which influences

fluences and presides over all the other parts ; and they are to be looked upon as beauties or imperfections, according as they agree with this grand and principal design.

Some of the orators of Rome and Athens have given to their prose an harmonious sweetnes, little inferior to that of poetry. Cicero, one of the most celebrated among them, has pointed out to us the chief means which they made use of to succeed herein. In every sentence, the different parts of which required to be properly divided by the pause of the voice, that they might be pronounced with ease and gracefulness, they were extremely careful to construct them in such a manner, that they might

be as it were linked together in the hearer's memory, either by a certain proportional connection, or a sort of gradation in their periods.

* A discourse is designed to be easily comprehended and retained by those who are the hearers ; and is then most agreeable, when, without affectation, it is formed in such a manner as may best answer that end.

Great artists then are careful to adapt all the different parts of their works to the same end : but this alone is not sufficient ; they likewise fix upon one particular part, in which they make all the rest to center.

The Gothic architects loved to place, on each side of their build-

* Cic. c. 3. *De orat.* c. 103.

ings,

ings, huge piles of stones, which distracted the sight, and rendered it indistinct. Bramant, and after him the greatest part of the modern architects, being better acquainted than their predecessors with the art of agreeably striking the sight, place in the middle of the building some conspicuous part, which presents to the eye a fixed point, from whence it may easily be carried thro' the whole extent of the work. Our great painters observe the same rule. The whole groupe of their figures is ranged in such a manner, that there is always one in particular which predominates over the rest, and, as it were, holds them under its command.

Poets follow the same maxim in the disposition of their images.

They are not only careful to keep all the different characters in a sort of subordination to the principal hero ; but they likewise endeavour to make all the incidents with which they present us, subservient to one great event. And, what can be more satisfactory to the mind, than to be able at once to take in such a number of facts, so connected together by the general relation which they bear to one important action ?

We may, without doubt, comprise in a poem different fables, and place there, as in a gallery, a succession of various representations. Ovid has followed this method, as well as Statius, and several other poets.



But

But several ages before their time, and when poetry was yet in its infancy, Homer perceived that it would be a more agreeable spectacle to the mind, to collect and introduce into one picture a number of actors, and make them all promotive of the same action. Upon this idea, he first formed the plan of an epic poem.

A considerable time afterwards, upon the plan of an epic poem, Aeschylus formed that of tragedy, by the real representation of an event brought to light in all its circumstances. This famous rival of Homer found, that a dramatic poem would afford to the mind still a greater degree of charms, when one principal action connected all the scenes, and held

E. 3. them.

them in a manner linked together in the memory. Moreover, *Æschylus* likewise added the unity of time and place to that of the action: 'tis true, indeed, that in his *Eumenides* the scene passes from Delphi to Athens; but in the rest of his pieces, it always continues the same.

M. de la Motte has attempted to deliver the dramatic poets from the obligation of that law, which *Æschylus*, and others of the ancients, seem to have imposed upon them. This celebrated advocate for the moderns has behaved in the empire of learning, in some measure as the sectaries did in Europe, about two hundred years ago. If he had been contented with declaring war against superstition only, then all sensib'

sensible people would have joined with him. But being incited by the warmth of his zeal, he has broke to pieces images which were worthy of the highest regard ; he has run down the most sacred opinions, and has substituted in their place the most disgraceful notions.

This broacher of new opinions is so much the more dangerous, as reason seems sometimes to shew herself in his favour. Very happy it is for the church and state, that they have nothing to fear from this pretended reformation, which may only occasion wars which are innocent, and such too as are often more beneficial than peace.

By the theory of sensation it appears certain, that the observing these three unities is not a mere arbit-

arbitrary rule, because there is a degree of pleasure annexed to whatever enables the imagination to form an exact representation of an object presented to her view.

However, we must acknowledge, that as the pleasures which affect the heart have the superiority over those of the imagination, therefore if the keeping up to these unities was only to make the representation more easy to the apprehension, then indeed we might sacrifice this advantage, when, by so doing, we could make the scenes more interesting by the number and variety of incidents. But there is another circumstance which must be taken into consideration.

In dramatic poetry, whatever tends to make it less interesting must

must be looked upon as an imperfection ; while, on the other hand, whatever contributes to heighten the imposition on the fancy is highly agreeable. If an old man acts the character of a youth, whilst a young man puts on that of age ; if the decorations represent the fields and country, when at the same time the scene is supposed to be in a palace ; or if the dresses are not suitable to the dignity of the persons ; then certainly all these disagreements will be offensive. The case is the same when the unity of time, place, and action is not observed. Let us suppose the principal action of a theatrical piece to be multiplied ; let several ages pass away in the space of a few hours ; let the spectator, in a moment, be transported from one

part of the world to another; will not all these things appear as the highest absurdities, while, at the same time, they will bring into our mind the fiction of the representation, and, as a voice, proclaim to us the folly of wasting real tears on feigned sorrows?



C H A P. IV:

There is a pleasure which accompanies all the motions of the heart, where fear and hatred have not the ascendancy.

THE human soul is susceptible of love or hatred, and it is by these passions that we are strongly attached to what seems to be our good, while, at the same time, we reject or fly from what appears to be the contrary; these are the two springs which put all our faculties in motion.

Hatred and the passions which arise from thence, are of necessity accompanied with a painful sensation, proceeding from the idea that we conceive of the evil which afflicts

afflicts, or threatens to afflict us. The infectious poison is conveyed into our very blood, and disturbing the course of transpiration, as appears evidently from the observations of Sanctorius, diffuses a disagreeable impression through the whole of the human body. Nevertheless there is a sort of sweet-ness which serves to allay this bitterness. The soul feels a pleasure in those passions which appear most suited to her present situation, and seem to have a tendency to destroy whatever threatens her. Such are the greatest part of our sensations. Pleasure and pain jointly make up the composition, which becomes agreeable, or disagreeable, in proportion as the former or latter of these ingredients do most prevail.

There

There are, at the same time, certain lively pleasures which are produced in the very bosom of hatred: the destruction of one's enemy appears the greatest of all blessings. There are even men, in whose eyes no object appears so charming, as the downfall of a neighbour, whom they accounted to be happy. The prosperity of another person increases the pain of their misery, and they are highly delighted when they see removed from their prospect, what was offensive to their sight.

Yet under all these malevolent pleasures, there lies concealed a hidden misery, which is only somewhat softened, and the sensation for a time suspended. Thus every man who is of an envious and mis-

chievous disposition, is naturally of a melancholy and gloomy turn of mind.

All other motions of the heart, besides those of fear or hatred, are agreeable. Whatever we feel of compassion, friendship, gratitude, generosity, or benevolence, affords us a pleasing sensation. How unhappy are the damned! said St Catherine of Genes, because they are no longer capable of loving; whilst every person of a benevolent soul, has a natural mirth and gaiety in his temper.

The influence of love and friendship is so great, that it even gives charms to sorrow itself. Has death swept off the object of your neighbour's highest affection? Do not sport with his sorrow, if you
have

have any regard to his happiness. He would give a repulse to your unseasonable comfort, and would break forth into these words of the poet,

*Mon deuil me plait, et doit toujours
me plaire,
Il me tient lieu de celui que je
pleurs †.*

Tis then that the soul represents to herself the idea of the person beloved in the most lively colours; she beholds, she enjoys it, and this enjoyment, tho' imaginary, affords her a real pleasure. A love of one's self being joined to this tender con-

† My sorrow pleases me, and ought always to do so, since to me it supplies the place of him whom I bewail.

cern, contributes likewise to make the grief still more interesting: we love to recal those sensations which have flattered us, and we applaud ourselves as having had merit to deserve them.

Let us attend to what Montagne says *, when he gives an account of the affliction which he fel^t at the death of his intimate friend, La-Boëtie. "I know, says he, " alas ! too well do I know by my " own experience, that there is no " comfort so pleasing after the " death of our friends, as the re- " membrance of our strict friend- " ship with them. O my friend ! " is it not a duty of my life, and " a duty also full of piety and de- " light, for ever to perform your

* Essays, I. 2. c. 8.

" funeral.

“ funeral rites? and ‘can there be
“ any earthly enjoyment which is
“ able to compensate the loss of
“ such a pleasure!’”

Cicero observes *, that there was somewhat of a secret pleasure, to alleviate the excessive grief which Lælius fell into upon the death of Scipio.

There have been devout visionaries, who have attempted to render their mind so far abstracted, as to desire the continuation of their love for God, and the annihilation of that pleasure which they felt in loving him. But to take away pleasure from the idea of loving, would be the same as if we were to take away roundness from the idea of a circle. Love is purely

* In Læl.

disinterested, when we have in view no other advantage resulting from thence, but the pleasure which accompanies the act itself. The disinterestedness of the Christian ought to advance thus far, and can go no farther.

If there have been divines who have imagined the soul to be capable of being wholly disinterested, with regard to pleasure, as a balance to them, there have been philosophers who have believed her unable to be swayed by any motives but those which took their rise from the prospect of self-interest. But, in order to confute this notion, let us, but for a moment, take a view of our public theatres. The shews exhibited there, tho' they are often calculated.

ted to debauch the mind, yet are sufficient to convince us, that she is formed for virtue. What means our tears for unfortunate heroes ! With what joy would we rescue them from their impending ruin ? Whence comes this attachment ? does it proceed from the ties of blood or friendship ? No, it does not ; but they are men who appear to be virtuous : we have implanted in us the seeds of benevolence, which are always ready to spring up in favour of virtue, and incline us to humanity, when their growth is not obstructed by contrary passions. History furnishes us with the story of a Grecian tyrant, who being present at the representation of Euripides's *Hecuba*, went out at the end of the first

act, filled with a conscious shame; when he found himself, in spite of himself, all in tears; by this means, shewing a tender feeling for the manes of the Trojans, which he never had felt for his own countrymen. Cruel when in pursuit of what seemed to be his interest, yet by nature formed for humanity, which he could not with-hold from those illustrious, but unfortunate men, from whom he had nothing to fear, he paid to them the tribute of benevolence, which was their due.

Since the motions of the heart are agreeable where benevolence reigns, and only become painful when hatred prevails, for this reason we are of opinion, that the ancients ought to have account.

ed those tragedies only to be defective, which raised the misfortunes of virtuous persons to such a degree, as to kindle our indignation, but not those wherein our solicitude for their fate is worked up to the catastrophe, and at last gives place to the joy of seeing them completely happy.

However, we must so far agree with Aristotle and his commentators, that a strong regard for our own preservation makes us more ready to receive the impression of sorrow than pleasure ; so that the soul more deeply interests herself with the misfortunes of a virtuous hero, than with his prosperity. His happiness, no doubt, would have given us joy : but by a certain magic power of tragedy, his very mis-

misfortunes affect us with a sort of pleasing sorrow, more agreeable than joy itself; because it affords a more lively exercise to our benevolence and humanity, the hidden charms of which are so powerful, as to be able to convert grief into pleasure, and render tears more agreeable than smiles.

But by what miracle is it brought about, that we should be so agreeably entertained with certain representations on the stage, while, at the same time, had they been really performed before us, we should have been shocked with inward horror? 'Tis owing to the different position of the object, that we feel such different impressions. The more likely the misfortunes of others are to reach us, so much the

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more we dread their becoming personal ; whereas those which tragedy presents us with, are seen at a remote view ; they do not alarm the love we bear to ourselves, they only excite that benevolent love which prevails within us in favour of virtuous persons.

Love retains something charming, even in the want of the object of its desire. We always, in some degree, enjoy what we hope for ; whereas we have not always the enjoyment of what we really possess. It is more pleasing to be carried by our wishes towards the least object, than really to possess the greatest advantages, while the heart remains inactive.

Hope gives an agreeable prospect to the novelty of all the differ-

sorts of happiness which we have in view: eager after pleasure, we flatter ourselves with the thoughts of obtaining it, from all unknown objects which seem to promise the gratification of our desires.

Truth herself is indebted to this secret hope for some part of her beautiful lustre. She often puts on a flattering appearance, attracting the mind by the pleasing hopes of success in a difficult inquiry, while she captivates the heart with the agreeable thoughts of possessing what is promised. But generally her principal charm decays when she becomes known to us: that pleasure which served to make us move cheerfully when in quest of truth, vanishes at once when we have obtained that acquisition: its real usefulness

fulness then constitutes the whole worth of it. Novelty loses a great part of her attractive faculty with regard to old people. They have learned by experience to distrust her promises.

The pleasure of variety is next to that of novelty. Amongst a croud of different objects presented to our sight, there are always some of them which offer somewhat new.

Such is the excellence of variety, that oftentimes we prefer it to order or proportion. Is it not this that makes us frequently quit the most regular gardens, and walk out into the fields?

Thus tho' we should give to our works all the perfection which they are capable of receiving from art,

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and all the exactness which men of the most exquisite taste can require; this may be agreeable, but this alone will not be sufficient. The Gothic architects divided their buildings into a number of different portions; a crowd of little statues clogged the front of their most magnificent edifices. This method appeared quite low and sordid to the great artists of the sixteenth century, as Castelvetro informs us, he had heard it so affirmed by Michael Angelo: and accordingly they again enriched the fine arts with that majestic grandeur, which is so conspicuous in all the Grecian and Roman monuments.

However, we must observe, with the author of *Reflections upon Poetry*

poetry and painting, that there are certain subjects which seem necessary to be drawn in miniature. This famous writer believes, that there can be no reason assigned for this. But it appears to me, that it is the character of the persons which determines it. A majestic stature would not at all suit a comical character. However this may be, if a work of art does not make a clear and strong impression upon the senses, or the imagination ; if it does not do this, I say, it will never be able to raise in the soul sensations which are lively, deep, or lasting ; and it is from these that poetry, oratory, painting, music, and all other arts, derive their most powerful charms. In vain will great artists endeavour to flatter our

eyes or ears with the most perfect imitation ; for if they do not present us with an object that's interesting, the reward of all their industry will be but the faint acknowledgment of a meer momentary admiration ; and we shall highly condemn them for not having exercised their talents, in exciting sensations of the heart, which are the only source of true pleasures.



C H A P. V.

Of the beauty of the body, the imagination, and the soul.

NATURE has enlightened us with knowledge, nor has she confined this to the sensation alone of what passes within ourselves. The qualities of others are likewise the objects of our knowledge, and they give us pleasure or pain according as they are agreeable, or otherwise, to the existence of those who possess them.

We cannot help being seized with an inward horror, when we behold other men with broken limbs, troublesome excrescencies, or of a cadaverous colour. On the contrary, a happy temperature

of the blood, is shewn by an agreeable colour of the complexion ; and the organs, which without having any thing superfluous, possess every thing necessary for the perfect execution of their offices, are characterized by the agreeable turn of the features.

Some parts of the body, such as the forehead, are susceptible of different forms, which nevertheless do not render them incapable of answering their design. Their beauty is in this case arbitrary. Thus it was in Egypt and Syria, that a favourable prepossession adorned those features, which had no other excellency, but that of having some resemblance to those of Alexander and Cleopatra.

Beauty varies according to the different climates in which nature has placed us. There is a beauty which shines in the Farnesian Hercules, as well as in the Venus of Medicis. It is even remarkable in the austere brow and wrinkles of Michael Angelo's Moses. So that for every age, and every sex, there is a peculiar species of ornament appropriated to every thing judged beautiful.

Some climates are not productive of regular beauties. There the idea of what is beautiful, is not placed in what really is so, but in what has the least deformity.

The beauties of the imagination furnish us with an entertainment still more agreeable than those of outward figure; and unless we are touched with envy or hatred, w

cannot, without pleasure, behold a lively penetration in another, which at once distinguishes truth and error; and we are charmed with a happy fancy, which entertains us with interesting pictures. A graceful air strikes us more than the beauty of the body, because it is as a transparent vail thro' which the mind may be observed. This gracefulness consists in the proper disposition of the attitude, the gesture, the movement, and the just expression of the thoughts, and adapting all of them to the end proposed. Moreover, if the execution of our design is not too much laboured, but seems to be done in the most natural and easy manner, this will render the whole still *more* agreeable.

The beauty of a lively genius, however sparkling it may be, is yet totally eclipsed by that of the soul. The most refined fallies of wit have nothing equal, or to be compared with the lustre of those charms which are so conspicuous in a courageous, disinterested, benevolent soul. Our theatres will always resound with applause in favour of the magnanimity of the high-priest, who had the fear of God, and no other fear: and mankind, in all ages, will applaud the generous humanity of Titus, who lamented the loss of all that time which he had not employed in making his fellow-creatures happy.

These native charms of the soul sometimes inspire us with a warm affection for the dead. How comes

it that Plutarch, in his comparisons, has a power over us superior to that of much greater historians, so as to make us read him over and over again, and yet always imagine it to be the first time? 'tis because he there gives us a sort of history of noble sentiments.

There have been some men, and these too famous for their knowledge of the human heart, who seem to have thought, that the pleasure which we take in the beauty of the soul, is only a secret joy arising from self-love, when we behold such qualities in another as are favourable to our own particular interest. But in answer to this, we may venture to affirm, that a traitor appears infamous, even to *the very people whom he has saved*

ved by his treachery. A prodigal is ridiculous to the very man whom he enriches by his own ruin. On the other hand, a stranger whom we know nothing of, one that's dead, attracts our admiration by an act of virtue, from which it is impossible we can ever reap any advantage; nay, it is not impossible, that even whilst our enemy strikes a dread into us, we may, at the same time, be charmed with the greatness of his courage.

It it is with the beauty of the soul, as with that of the body. It distinguishes the qualities which are most suited to the existence of those who possess them. What can be more convenient for the weak state of man, than by our benevolence to engage others in our interest,
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preserve a resolution in our greate dangers, and to treasure up in ou own breasts, a richness and great ness of soul, which may render i independent of fortune ?

But if the observation holds tru that the beauty of the body, as we as the mind and soul, marks out tl qualities which are most useful i those who possess them ; whence comes it about, that they likewi convey a pleasure to a soul whic is an entire stranger to them ?

Here let us admire the wisdon and goodness of our Creator.

If we turn our eyes upon th weakness of man, when in a stat of infancy, when oppressed wit infirmities, when in solitude, c when worn out with years ; if w consider his turn for arts and scien

ces, his fondness for esteem and applause, together with his desire of friendship and company; these considerations will point out to us, that he is formed for society; that there are secret ties which unite him in the closest manner to those who surround him in life. Besides, in this situation, it was of the highest importance that we should be able at once to discern those men whose correspondence might be useful to us, as well as those who might prove destructive. If we perceive a cadaverous colour in the complexion, an unhappy turn in the imagination, and a dark and gloomy disposition of the soul, these qualities, fatal to him who possesses them, and dangerous to those who approach him, shock us by their deformi-

deformity, and are, as it were, the cry of nature, who cautions us to guard against an enemy who threatens us. On the other hand, a happy conformation of organs, a delicacy of imagination, and a peculiar beauty of soul, by contributing to the happiness of him who possesses them, may, at the same time, promote the felicity of those who have any communication with him. Fine features adorn those amiable qualities of the soul, and in a manner promise that they may be useful to ourselves, in the different circumstances of life wherein we may be placed. 'Tis probably this beneficent care of nature which has occasioned the contempt of those, who, instead of acknowledging the hand of God in the beauty

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of the soul, have imagined that it sprung from the reflections of self-love, upon what might be for its own advantage: as if this strong impression which it makes upon us, was not prior to all our observations.

The beauty of good morals, the greatest ornament of mankind, is nothing else but the beauty of the soul marked out in the conduct of life. If in works of art, the relation of the means to the end is sufficient to embellish them, what spectacle can be more agreeable, than the relation of all the actions of a virtuous man to an end suited to his talents, to his condition, to the happiness of his fellow-creatures, as well as his own felicity? *On the other hand, what deformities*

can be more offensive to the right, than to see friendship and justice given up as a sacrifice to self-interest? What more scandalous than the debasing ourselves by the meanness of the objects which we pursue, or blindly giving up ourselves to the dictates of a rash presumption, or wavering to and fro in unsettled principles,

† *Tournant au moindre vent, tombant au moindre choc,
Aujourd'hui dans un casque, &
demain dans un froc?*

Diotimus, so much celebrated by the praise of Socrates, had very good reason to persuade him not

† Changing with the gentlest gale, falling by the slightest shock; to-day a warrior, and ~~to-morrow~~ a devotee.

to look upon the beauties of nature and art *, in any other light than as steps which were to conduct him to a superior beauty.. Let us extend and refine our taste, till at last we render it perfect, and able to relish this beauty, of which wisdom is a branch; if we even have that affection, and give the respect which is due to virtue, this, in some degree, is being virtuous.

"Tis the united beauty of the soul and the imagination, which conspire to form that valuable and uncommon accomplishment which is but faintly expressed by the term *Urbanity*, which shines so much through the most of Plato's and Ciceron's works ; 'tis a genteel politeness which knows how to approve

* Plat. in *Sympos.*

without being fulsome; to give praife unmix'd with envy; and rally without ill-nature; which points out the foibles of mankind with a sprightly humour, unaccompanied with malice, which is able to throw the gravest subjects into the most agreeable dress, either by an ironical turn, or by a dexterity of expression; from gravity passes to pleasantry, and employ an easy wit, which affords a double pleasure to the mind, because it is not hidden or perplex'd, while, at the same time, it leaves room for somewhat of conjecture, and gives a pleasing joyful appearance to all the sentiments of virtue.

The air of the face, and the whole person, sometimes bring into one point of view, all these diffe-

sent kinds of beauty. There is a certain analogy which the outward figure preserves with the qualities which characterize the moral dispositions of the soul and mind.

The happy conformation of the organs is denoted by an air of freedom and boldness; that of the fluids, by an air of vivacity and briskness; an air of delicacy is as it were a spark which proceeds from a fine imagination; an air of softness denotes delusive complaisance; a majestic air indicates a sublimity of sentiment; a tender sweetness in the air is a sure mark of a return of friendship.

All these different airs are agreeable, not only because of the qualities which they express, but likewise by the sensations which they excite

excite in the person who perceive them: and they become more or less so, in proportion to the secret relations which they bear to our particular dispositions.

Those animals which strike us by their beauty, give us this agreeable impression, either from the brightness of their colour, or the gracefulness which they seem to have in their motion, and the sensations which they seem to express to us by their air.



C H A P. VI.

Of the satisfaction which is annexed to virtuous pleasures; that is to say, such as are proofs of our perfection.

Hitherto I have confined myself to the consideration of those objects, which, of themselves, are agreeable; but there are likewise others which become so, merely by the relation which they bear to these first objects: such is perfection.

Among all the goods of life, which flatter us by the pleasing aspect which they put on, perfection is the most valuable; it is as it were the standard of happiness; and there is a secret charm which
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accompanies whatever persuades us that we are in possession of it. But this idea so interesting, is created by our own fancy, out of the different materials furnished by education, constitution, society, and our own reflections: generally we imagine it to consist of an assemblage of qualities foreign to us, which can be given or taken away by the caprice of fortune: How absurd is the mistake! but reason easily triumphs over it, and always predominates in men led by her dictates.

The chief end of all moral philosophy, is to give us clear ideas relating to this point.

Confucius and Zeno have placed perfection in an exercise of our faculties suited to the nature of our beings.

beings. We are by nature intelligent beings; we are formed for society; we are then perfect when truth directs our judgment, and justice prevails in all our actions.

Pythagoras, Socrates, and divines of all religions, have believed the perfection of man, and, at the same time, that of the works of all reasonable beings, to depend entirely on the relation of their faculties to the design of their Creator.

In short, according to Epicurus, man is perfect when the method of his thinking and acting is such, as to conduct him by the most short and easy way towards the end he proposes to himself, that is, towards his own happiness. Those three different manners of considering perfection

are so nearly related, that they ought not in reality to be distinguished. Perfection consists in the possession of such qualities of the body, mind, and soul, as are calculated to procure our greatest happiness, in conformity to the intentions of our Creator, which are deeply imprinted in the very nature of our being. We arrive at a higher degree of perfection, in proportion as the body is less distempered, and is capable of performing the motions allotted to it, according as the mind is less misled by error, and can with ease comprehend, and set forth the beauty of truth. In short, we become more perfect, in proportion as the soul is less depraved in her taste, and the more free she is from the seeds of envy, melancholy, and

uneasiness, and the more she is disposed to regulate all her desires by a clear and certain judgment, the object of which is solid and lasting happiness.

But let us not confine this solid and lasting happiness to the limits of a few years. Our own inward reflection ought to convince every being which has the principle of thinking, that this principle is indivisible, and consequently immortal. The prospect of a future felicity, ought always to be considered by us as the principal part of our present happiness.

"Tis from this idea of perfection that friendship borrows all her charms, tho' indeed Epicurus, and other philosophers, have imagined the source of it to be derived from

our inability, without the assistance of others, to procure the necessaries and conveniences of life. But there is such a tie, which is only mercenary traffic of interests, there is another, the object of which much more noble ; in this last we less consider advantages received from others, than the proofs we have of their perfection. The liberality of Claudius towards the said Passienus, I account more valuable than his friendship ; but the friendship of Augustus appears to me more precious than his very bounty *.

The charms of grandeur do not consist, as M. Paschal imagined, in keeping thought at a distance, and so hindering the great from thinking

* Seneca, l. 10. *De benef.*

ing on themselves. The greatest pleasure attending that state, consists rather in this, that all with whom the grandese converse, are extremely assiduous to heighten and exalt the ideas they have conceived of their own persons and qualities.

Most of our vices only debase and sink us beneath our reason, because they flatter us. We content ourselves with receiving from an appearance of perfection, an inward satisfaction, which can only flow from real perfection. Weak foolish mortals ! an empty shadow is sufficient to make the strongest impression on us ; whatever clothes itself with the outward form of strength, dexterity, or virtue, makes its way to us by the most endearing charms.

It is this chimerical perfection which gives so high a value to revenge. Aristotle has made it appear evident by several facts, that when we are equally enraged against several enemies, and our revenge has been remarkably glutted upon one of them, this blunts the edge of our resentment against all the rest. We have then given one signal proof of our power, and for this reason we are less ardent to seek a second.

But pride, in order to flatter us, has no occasion to display to our sight the lustre of all our perfections. Whatever contributes to sink other men, at the same time raises us by the comparison which we make of their condition with our own. The faults and disgraces of others, are matter

matter of pleasure to us, unless they become objects of compassion. We have, by nature, a tender sympathy for the misfortunes of others, when they appear considerable; but if they are slight, then we love to enjoy this kind of superiority, which our being free from them seems to give us.

It indeed would be to banish all enjoyment from society, were we not to admit of that innocent railly, which, with good humour, exercises a sort of requisite justice upon the imperfections of others: but those are an unhappy set of mortals, who take a pleasure in being too severe upon the failings of mankind; for this malicious propensity has a real misery concealed under it. This is striving

It is with our perfection as it is with every thing else which is capable of a proof; it is proved to us not only by the evidence of our own sensations, but likewise by the authority of others.

We cannot help wishing for the approbation of those among whom we live; and this we do independently of any motive of interest. Self-love will scarce presume to vindicate itself, unless it has the concurrent approbation of others. This fondness for esteem is naturally proportioned to the extent of our abilities. An elevation of genius and greatness of soul prompts a man to look for an acknowledgment of the excellency of his judgment, from men of all climates and all

all ages. It is true indeed, we may say of the wise man, if there is any one worthy of the title, what the most ancient writer of tragedy has said of one of his heroes * : Content with being really praiseworthy, he cares not whether he has the praise or not. But even this man is not quite free from the desire of glory: he only carries it a degree farther than the rest of mankind; he aspires at having the approbation of God himself.

The esteem of others not only flatters us by the favourable idea which it gives us of our personal qualities, but because it persuades us, that others consider our happiness as making part of theirs. So great is our connection and depen-

* *Eschylus, Amphiarans.*

dence.

dence upon each other, that there is not one man who is not able to disturb our felicity, tho' there are more who incline to procure and increase it. What can be more happy for us, in our weak state, than to perceive, in all around us, an universal inclination to favour our wishes?

But if the esteem of others has in itself no allurement; but according to the happiness which it promises us, how comes it that we should endeavour to procure it by the sacrifice of our lives? History has immortalized such Greeks, Romans, and Chinese, as have devoted themselves to certain death, without any other motive than that of exchanging their life for the praises of posterity. How strange

it is, that men who had no notion of a future state, should run to meet their destruction, in order to procure such a happiness?

This heroic principle, according to Cicero, flows from a secret hope that flatters us with the prospect of enjoying reputation, which will even reach us when laid in the grave. A confused notion of immortality prevails even among those who have not a clear idea of this truth. But there is still another consideration; it is very possible that these illustrious persons may have been more happy in their death, than they would have been had they enjoyed life longer, as they were admired by their friends and countrymen, and persuaded that they should be so by their posterity;

rity; nay even by their very enemies and all mankind is general: This croud of admirers, to a lively imagination, forms an object so delightful, that, though of short duratiion, it appears more valuable than a long succession of sensations, which, tho' agreeable, yet have an alloy of bitterness and chagrin.

Those qualities which distinguish us from others, are not the only ones which flatter us; whatever shews the perfection of our species, makes a pleasing impression upon us.

The grandeur and variety of objects, as well as sublimity of thought and sentiment, seem to derive the greatest part of their charms from the conviction they afford.

afford us of the greatness of the human genius. And if the representation of an object appears more pleasing in a picture than it does in a pond, the reason seems to be, because the image reflected in the water only flatters our sight, whereas the art of painting or statuary, breathing life, as it were, into the canvas or marble, contributes to heighten our vanity and self-love, by a reflection which indeed ought rather to mortify us, when we consider, what wonders one man does, which another is utterly incapable of.

C H A P. VII.

*Of the modifications of the brain,
which go before, or accompany
any agreeable sensations.*

SO far I have endeavoured to find out the source of pleasure in the soul, and the organs of sensation. According to their different modifications, there are always others in the brain, which are similar and proportional to them, the traces of which are retained by the memory. Is there any possibility of unfolding this mystery? For 'tis here especially that nature seems to have covered herself with a veil, which mortals, I'm afraid, will never be able to remove. But if we cannot flatter ourselves with the hope

hopes of arriving at a true knowledge in this point ; let us not however despair of guessing a little, since, when experience fails us, conjecture is always ready to assist us with her light.

We cannot observe Nature, without perceiving that a rich simplicity reigns through all her laws. We may form a notion then of the impression which is made upon the brain, by that made upon the organs of the senses, which are, as it were, the extensions or branches of it. An object which is agreeable, exercises the fibres of the brain, without weakening or exhausting them ; on the other hand, whatever is displeasing wounds them, and whatever is tiresome leaves them in a state of inactivity.

It is not only from the degree of motion in the fibres of the brain that this pleasure springs, but it chiefly arises from the relation which the motions imprinted there bear to each other. The theory of music teaches us, that the most pleasing harmony is that, where the vibrations which compose it do most often unite : This has induced the greatest natural philosophers to believe, that those colours, smells, and tastes, which being mixed are agreeable, excite in the organs of sight, smell, and taste, certain vibrations which agree and correspond with each other. Are we not therefore authorised to conjecture that symmetry, rhyme, proportion, imitation, and that just relation of certain means to a determined end and principal

pincipal object; in a word, the pleasures which charm us most, either in the works of nature or art, make, at the same time, agreeable impressions on the brain, because they produce ideas which are closely connected, and assist each other?

But whence comes it that we feel so grateful an impression from those qualities which constitute the beauty of the body, mind, or soul, when at the same time we do not perceive their hidden relation to utility, which constitutes their real worth? The source of this pleasure certainly flows from the wise contrivance of the author of nature, who has formed men in such a manner, that notwithstanding that self-love which creates misunder-

standings amongst them, yet they are members of the same body: Their happiness as well as their misfortunes are common, unless obstructed by their particular dispositions. A person of a delicate constitution cannot behold another with a fractured limb, but he immediately feels the same part of his body affected with the wound inflicted on his neighbour; and tho' this impression may not be so sensible in a robust man, yet, in some degree, he too will feel it.

Painful sensations are not the only ones which diffuse themselves by a sort of contagion; since we find from experience, that a sprightly humour and gaiety in our disposition, will likewise communicate itself

itself to those who come into our company.

It is therefore evident, that the beauties of the body, the imagination, and the soul, make a pleasing impression on the spectator, because they excite in his brain a motion which tends to communicate them to him, and will succeed too, if not opposed by particular dispositions.

It has been said, that geometry has the chief direction in the formation of the heavens ; and we may say of harmony, that she has been the principal mistress in the construction of our brain.. What raptures, what agitations are not excited by certain tunes ? How much are we inspired with the love of dancing by music ; How

wonderful is its power in the sudden cure of certain distempers? This exercise of the fibres of the brain, which so nearly resembles that of the chords of an instrument, plainly evinces that our brains are in reality a kind of instruments furnished with chords, composed of a number of nervous fibres, of different tensions, and consequently susceptible of an infinite variety of vibrations. They communicate their motions by the assistance of the eyes and ears: This they do more easily, in proportion as they contain a greater number of chords which act in concert together, or as the chords of some are more strong and able to move than those of others.

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There are souls which, at once, attract each other with greater force than the loadstone does iron ; and nothing can surpass that facility which those who love each other have in communicating their ideas ; their brains seem to be tuned in unison.

There are others to whom nature seems to have given a sort of sovereignty over the rest of mankind ; hence men of this class, sometimes reduce men of the greatest courage, as well as the most powerful princes, to the most abject state of slavery. The Marchioness of Ancre, who was accused of magic, being asked, What charm she made use of to procure such a power over the human fancy ? I have never employed any other, answered she to her judges, *than*

than that ascendancy which noble souls have over others. It was the force of this charm which enabled Mahomet and Cromwell, the one to overturn the constitution of Arabia, the other that of England, which they modelled anew at their pleasure. History informs us, that their dependents soon imbibed their sentiments ; the fibres of their brains, susceptible of a similar and equally lively agitation, easily excited a similar sensation in the brains of those with whom they conversed.

But from what mechanism does it proceed, that the vibrations of the fibres of the brain have a power to transmit themselves to that of another person ? The ingenious hypothesis of M. de Mairan, upon

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the communication of sounds, throws some light upon this mystery. Sound reaches us, because there are certain fibres in sonorous bodies, together with the parcels of air, the fibres of the ear, and lastly, those of the brain, which form a continued chain of chords, which communicate their motions to each other. Since the motions of the body, the colour of the face, and the disposition of the eye, point out to others the particular state of our soul, may we not, with some reason, conclude, that there is a chain, with chords in unison, which convey from one brain the vibrations of the fibres of another?

It is from this secret relation which the dispositions of our brain

have to each other, that sympathy arises, and all our whimsical tastes, which make us find out a particular pleasure in certain objects, that others are quite strangers to. What pleases us most, is not always what is most intitled to do so. Is a man seized with a deep melancholy? then he only loves dark and gloomy places where joy never approaches. No object makes a more pleasing impression, than that which excites in the fibres of the brain, such vibrations as correspond with those of the soul: these are the sensations which yield her a peculiar satisfaction.

A new-born infant seems to be the most insignificant creature in the whole universe; nevertheless it is the *most* charming of all objects to *those*

those who gave it birth. Yet this particular pleasure is not attached to the identical person of the child. 'Tis only in poems and romances that we find instances of a discerning instinct of the parent; for, in reality, the most affectionate mother will hug as her own son, one who has been put in his place. It appears then, that the tenderness of parents derives its source from the peculiar formation of their brain, the structure of which is so admirably contrived, that they cannot, without an extasy of pleasure, behold the fruit of their love, formed of their own substance, which will be to them a loving subject, whom nature has put under their laws, from whom, when worn out with age and infirmities, they have

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right to expect that succour which they gave to its helpless infancy, who will inherit their name, their fortune, nay their very ideas and affections.

In order to finish this slight sketch which we have given concerning the physical nature of sensations, we shall, at present, endeavour to trace out that particular part of the brain which is the seat of pleasure and pain, which receives the impressions from neighbouring objects, and consequently acts upon our organs : This part must have solidity and strength, since the characters imprinted there cannot be worn out for a space of years. This nervous membrane must hold and touch the extremity of every nerve pertaining to sensation, in order

order to receive all the different impressions of it. It must, at the same time, have a power over the origin of every nerve subservient to motion, to be able to communicate such motions as are suited to the vibrations which it feels. All these different marks seem to be united in the membrane called by anatomists *pia mater*, which, according to the expression of M. Winslow, includes the whole mass of the brain, is strongly adherent to it, and, by a quantity of foldings and duplicatures, produces a considerable number of many-folded waving partitions, which penetrate into all the adjacent parts, and make their way into all the different seats of the brain and *cerbellum*.

However, if it was true, that it sometimes happened that a retrenchment of a considerable portion of the *pia mater* did not in the least prejudice the faculties of sensation, we should then have reason to conclude, that this nervous membrane is not what we inquire after. But however it is, we cannot, unless by some very unfortunate accident, come to a certain light in this point.



C H A P. VIII.

*Of the relation which the laws of
sensation have to our preserva-
tion.*

ALL agreeable sensations may
be reduced to two different
classes.

One consists of the bounties of
nature, which convey pleasing sen-
sations, antecedent to all reflection:
among which may be accounted,
not only the pleasures of the senses,
but likewise the most of those of
the imagination, as well as of the
heart; the beauty of the body, the
mind, and the soul, and all that
variety of agreeable objects which
shine throughout the works of na-
ture and art. They are joined to

whatever exercises the organs of our faculties without fatiguing them. It is to these organs that we are indebted every moment for our preservation; and it is of the utmost importance to us, that pleasure should distinguish whatever tends to promote this exercise of the fibres, and the motion of the fluids.

The other class is made up of those sensations which arise from our manner of thinking, and cease upon the change of our ideas. One man aspires at independency; another consents to obey, because, by this means, he expects to arrive at command: one person takes a pleasure in hoarding up riches, which become useless to him, whilst

whilst another loves to squander away the estate which was necessary to support him in life. This influence which our thoughts have over our pleasures, is the chief characteristic of the human species.

At our first setting out in life, we are generally bent on the pursuit of the particular sensations which are agreeable to us; but, in a little time, being instructed by experience, we find that there are pleasures which follow pain, as well as pains which follow the train of pleasure: this makes us aspire at having sensations truly valuable, and acquiring qualities which we esteem most. Thus we form ideas of happiness and perfection, which make us blind to every other advantage. The

culty which we possess of applying these two important ideas to various objects, proves often destructive to us; yet it would have been doing a signal prejudice to man, to have made him insensible to the impressions which they make upon him. They comfort us in our misfortunes; they inspire us with resolution to encounter our difficulties; and they strew flowers in the paths which they invite us to pursue. To them we are indebted for our purest pleasures, all that contributes to the glory and happiness of society, the arts and sciences, and all the virtues, nay, even our very preservation. Other animals need only to lay hold of the nourishment which is offered them; but man grows up in the

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most excessive indigence, without raiment, without shelter, and almost without any other nourishment, than what is the fruit of his labour. The surest resource which he has, is by reflecting on the time past, to be able to make provision for futurity. The ideas of perfection and happiness are the springs which move him to this necessary foresight, and consequently employ all his different faculties..



C H A P. IX.

*Where the reason is inquired into,
why the laws of sensation being
the same in all men, there should
yet be such a difference in tastes.*

AFTER having attempted to explain the laws of sensation, let us now take notice of something pretty singular, that is, the diversity of tastes, which nevertheless all flow from the same source. We may venture to say, that the nothern and southern nations, those who are but separated by an arm of the sea, or by a ridge of mountains, nay, men born in the same family, will have quite different pleasures: What, in some, will.

will be pleasing to their eyes, ears, and mind, the very same will be to others a punishment.

The diversity of the organs is the principal cause of this: Thus it is, that an eye of tender and delicate fibres, will love violet rather than orange colour; because, as it has been made evident by the experiments of Sir Isaac Newton, the violet is a colour made up of weaker rays: on the other hand, the orange will be preferred by those who have the fibres of the eye of a more strong and solid make.

Sounds that are offensive to a delicate people, are not so to a rougher nation; a man whom Petrarch mentions, was not so much charmed with the melody a
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nightingales, as he was with the croaking of a parcel of frogs. The fibres of his ear were certainly so closely joined, that a succession of harsh sounds could move without fatiguing them.

Nature has perhaps more diversified our brains than the organs of our senses. What a difference is there betwixt the heat of an Indian head, and the coldness of a frozen Laplander's ! An object cannot make the same impression on such different substances. Thus among the people of the south, a declamation, to be agreeable, ought to be more animated than amongst the northern nations, because it must be suited to a more lively sensation.

The bounds or extent of our knowledge are likewise other causes for the strangeness of our tastes.

Some are only struck with the beauties which really exist in an object, whilst others only yield to the impression made by the privation of some beauties in it.

The Egyptians chiefly admired grandeur in their works of architecture; the Goths were fond of variety. Our great architects have rejected neither of these beauties, but they have had the art of joining them both together, and forming an agreeable proportion.

As it is with architecture, so it is likewise with music: some regard only bold and lofty pieces of music; others again are most pleased with an exact imitation of na-

ture

ture. But a great musician admits both sorts into his composition; he has the art of giving such a proper softness to the most jarring sounds, as to make them produce the finest harmony: but what he chiefly aims at, is to raise sensations; and he thinks he has not arrived at the perfection of his art, till he knows how to master the soul, as well as flatter the ear.

Happy are those nations, where men of such surprising abilities start up, who can discern and make use of all these different sorts of beauties, and unite them together in a just proportion! We may say that Nature, with a scanty hand, has sown such geniuses, at a remote distance from each other, in the course of ages. Their works, which

are founded upon the finest taste, likewise infuse the same delicacy into a whole people: They become the standards of comparison, and it often happens that an object which before attracted our admiration, loses all its charms, and grows insipid, according to the Italian proverb, That the greatest enemy to any thing that is good, is what is best. Bring some tepid water to two men, one of whom we shall suppose to be full of heat, and the other pinched with cold, the same water will appear warm to the one and cold to the other; the laws of sensation are the same in both, but the standard of their comparison is different: one forms his judgment of the quality of the

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In the thirteenth century, the arts and sciences were buried in obscurity over all Europe. The magistrates of Florence, as Vasari* informs us, entered into a scheme, wherein they spared no expence to bring from the most distant parts of Greece the most eminent painters, whose works were then esteemed the capital pieces of this art. Cimabue became their disciple, and collected all the fragments which were to be found of Parrhasius and Apelles. He soon became superior to his masters, and entirely eclipsed them. We see by le Dante †, that he was then

* Tom. 1. p. 2. † 11^o Cant del purgat.

thought to be arrived at the height of this art. But Giotto, who was Cimabue's scholar, gave shining proofs, that a much greater perfection could be arrived at than his master had attained, and accordingly his works were universally admired as the most perfect.

† Petrarch, ‡ le Dante, and his ancient commentator, are famous evidences in this point. Michael Angelo and Raphael have likewise surpassed Cimabue and Giotto; but we have reason to believe, that we are indebted to these two first artists for their illustrious successors.

Let us not shew too great a contempt of the Chinese or Indian

† Testament, and the fifth Book of his letters. ‡ The 11th Canto of his purgat.

painters. Paintings more imperfect than theirs are, would very probably have been much admired by us, if, by a lucky chance, there had not sprung up a set of magistrates in Florence, who were capable of forming a grand design, while, at the same juncture, there were artists of such abilities as enabled them to turn to their advantage the encouragement which was offered to them.

Scripture-pieces, however coarse and unpolished they might be, yet they charmed our ancestors who had seen nothing better. At that time the Chinese might have reproached them for their want of taste; and perhaps, with the same justice too, they might have ridiculed those who were the admirers of

of de Lope, de Vegue, and Shake-spear. But as long as the Chineſe, the Spaniards, and the English, are touched with admiration, when they behold on their theatre great and noble ſentiments, when the dialogues in the ſcenes are properly adapted to the characters, and the paſſions of the ſoul are expreſſed in a ſtrong and lively manner; ſo long as they have a taste for the beauties of Sophocles, and the excellencies of the truly great dramatic poeſts among the ancients and moderns, ſo long will it give them pain to behold thoſe faulty representations, where the great beauties of the recital are diſfigured by the irregularity of the whole, of which they are only a part.

The dispositions of the heart are likewise able to raise a difference in our tastes. Envy, that gloomy lover of the dead, hates the living, and makes artists deprecate each other. On the other hand, if the rival is not cotemporary, or of the same country with us, then he escapes the darts of envy ; we love then to give him the highest degree of perfection, and we hope to share with him those laurels which we bestow upon him.

Ambition likewise is sometimes concerned in deciding the glory of artists, as well as that of their works. The Romans esteemed only those talents which might enable them to be leaders in the commonwealth, or to triumph over the

the neighbouring nations *. So that those same pictures and statues which struck a Grecian with admiration, appeared to a Roman quite low and insignificant : such is the effect of those passions which possess the soul, that they throw an air of ugliness and deformity upon whatever is not suited to the end which they pursue.

Sometimes too it happens, that our religious principles have an influence over our taste ; a pious Mussulman looks upon the most perfect statues to be so many dangerous idols.

* Cicero, 6 ver.

C H A P. X.

The laws of sensation are the work of a bountiful and intelligent power.

AS SOON as mankind came to a knowledge in anatomy, they perceived that the size and strength of each muscle was in proportion to that of the bone, to which it was joined. Some anatomists being struck with this beautiful proportion, have urged against the Epicureans, that if, according to their supposition, a blind power had formed the moving structure of animal bodies, such a power as this could never have so curiously suited to the weight of each bone, the strength of the muscle.

muscle designed to move and support it. The Epicureans, in answer to this, say, that these muscles were not different in their nature, and that those which had the most exercise, became the most brawny, in the same manner as those men who undergo most labour, are generally most robust. This is the low refuge of atheism, and the only one too. Galen *, with great ease, shewed the falsity of it. He made it evident that infants, taken out of the mother's womb, had these proportions discernable in them, as well as in the most active wrestlers.

The different sorts of agreeable sensations, furnish us likewise with a proof for the being of a Diety.

* Galen. *De usu partium.*

They are distinguished by natural characters, to impute the cause of which to a blind chance, would be the highest absurdity.

How comes it that, in the productions of art, the relation which all the parts bear to the principal end, gives us no pleasure till we are fitted for it by instruction; while, at the same time, by a secret charm, which is prior to all our reflections, we are at once made sensible of the beauty in the structure of man, animals, and plants? Can we believe that the Author of nature is himself ignorant of what he reveals to us? Can we deny intelligence to the creator of the universe, who has surrounded us with such a number of agreeable beauties, which are as so many characters

racters engraved by his bountiful hand, and serve to mark out to us that secret relation which is kept up betwixt man, and all the other parts of the creation.

These characters are more or less distinguished, according to the importance of what they declare to us. Among all the objects which are presented to our senses, there are none which make a more agreeable impression than a fine face. But the most exact and regular features do not touch us so much as the beauties of a fine genius; whilst these again are greatly eclipsed by the superior splendor of noble sentiments and actions, which discover a greatness of soul and height of courage.

The beauty of the body has the advantage of being always before our eyes, whilst that of the mind and soul does not shew itself but at particular times. But whenever these different objects are presented to us, and passion does not hinder us from a proper view of them, then the pleasure arising from them, will be according to that disposition and order which I have taken notice of. And thus it is, that experience confirms what nature teaches us; that the beauty of a sprightly wit intitles us more to happiness than that of the body, while, at the same time, it is greatly inferior to that of the soul. Sometimes it happens, by our particular dispositions, that the beauty of

of the body makes a more lively impression upon us, than that of the mind or soul ; then it becomes an allurement which invites us to procure a sort of immortality : the Author of nature looked upon the preservation of our species to be an object more worthy of his care, than the personal advantage of any individual.

That same wisdom which has thus distinguished the beauty of the body, the imagination, and the soul, has likewise diversified their motions ; those of the imagination being more agreeable than those of the body, while, on the other hand, they are greatly inferior to those of the soul.

Besides, there is still another difference in our pleasures,

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proclaims aloud that there is an intelligent power. Agreeable smells, noble pieces of architecture, the charms of painting, oratory, music, geometry, history, and the pleasures of a select company; all these are of such a nature, that the enjoyment of them gives us pleasure, while, at the same time, the being deprived of them causes no real pain. They are not supplies to our necessary wants, they are only graceful ornaments, which serve to enrich and increase our happiness. What number of people are utter strangers to them, and yet enjoy a life of tranquillity? Even those who are most sensible of these pleasures can part with them for others. 'Tis not so with other sorts of agreeable sensations.

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Thus, for instance, the law of nature, which invites us to nourish ourselves, does not only reward us for our compliance, but likewise punishes us if we do not obey her call. The author of nature has not thought it sufficient to entice us, by a particular pleasure, to be careful of our preservation ; but, at the same time, he incites us by a more powerful motive, which is pain.

His bountiful care is manifest, even in the different duration of these various sensations : Those which affect our sight, our hearing, the imagination, or the heart as well as those which accompany a moderate exercise, seem to be always before us ; they fill without being prejudicia It is not the same with

sure which is annexed to nourishment. Had it gone farther than the satisfying nature, then an immoderate use of the most wholesome food, might have become the most deadly poison.

Among all pleasures, there are none more remarkable than that of a new-born infant. How is it to be successfully nourished? In vain would nature have furnished the mother's breast with proper nourishment, had she not, at the same time, enabled the child to extract this useful liquor? The infant, as yet incapable of any other exercise of its faculties, pleases itself with moving its lips and cheeks, in such a manner that it affords a passage into the mouth for the milk when offered. The pleasant taste of this nourishment

nourishment becomes a new motive to make it repeat these motions. It passes away the beginning of life either in sleep, or in the enjoyment of the only pleasures which it can feel; so that this infirm being, which at first sight might seem to be in a state of misery, in reality lives amidst a succession of agreeable sensations.

The same Being who is the author of our happiness, is likewise of our pains. Upon this account some philosophers have arrogantly presumed to deny his intelligence, and debased him into blind chance. Among these Mr. Bayle has been a remarkable champion, the sum of whose doctrine is as follows.

“ If a sovereign and intelligent Being had established the laws.

The Theory of
“ of sensation, then surely he
“ would have enriched his crea-
“ tures with all the happiness
“ which they were capable of.
“ He would have excluded from
“ the universe all painful sensa-
“ tions, especially those which can
“ be no ways serviceable. To
“ what purpose serve the pains of
“ a man groaning under an incur-
“ able distemper, or what end can
“ be answered by the agonies of a
“ woman in labour in a desert?”

This is the famous objection ad-
vanced by Mr. Bayle, which he
has dwelt so long upon in his wri-
tings, and has repeated again and
again in a thousand different shapes;
and tho' it has been urged ever
since pain has been known in the
world, yet he has had the art of
arming

arming it with so many shining comparisons, that philosophers and divines have been frightened as at something new and terrible. Some have called in metaphysics to their aid ; whilst others have had recourse to the spaciousness of the heavens ; and in order to comfort us in our afflictions, they have set before us an infinite variety of worlds peopled by happy inhabitants. I shall not here make use of any new hypothesis, but shall confine myself to the objection itself ; and, even from this, endeavour to draw out a proof of the very doctrine which it opposes : nor shall I bring in any deep or abstruse reflections, but such as may occur to the slightest attention.

The greatest part of philosophers, instead of taking their ideas of beings from their nature, have formed their notions of them from their own ideas. Seated in their closets they have searched into the hidden recesses of nature, and, in some sort, resembling Cervantes's hero, mounted upon a wooden horse, with their eyes bound up: in this manner they have traversed the whole universe, determining the nature of all beings, and assigning to each of them their particular functions.

This has been the sort of philosophy which Mr Bayle has fallen into: he has wrested the meaning of certain theological expressions, in order to make it appear, that there can be no other power in God,

God, but that of making all his creatures perfectly happy ; thus having framed an idol which nature as well as religion disclaims, it then became an easy matter for him to destroy the work of his hands. Natural theology is a branch of physics. If then we have a mind to guard ourselves from this deceitful illusion, let us follow the method which is successfully made use of in sciences of the same kind. Let us make observations and inquiries into nature, and so frame our ideas according to the discoveries which we make. Let this be the thread which may guide us in our researches, and, where this fails, there let us stop.

In relation to the author of the laws of sensation, two questions,

and these very different too, may be asked: Is he intelligent? Is he beneficent? Now if we do not consider these two points distinctly and separately, or if we deny him to be an intelligent Being, because he may not have been beneficent in proportion to our desires, this would be offering a violence to the first laws of the art of thinking. Let us not then confound these two questions together, but examine them apart; and so we shall endeavour to clear up the first.

We know by experience that there are blind causes, that is to say, such as have no design, and there are likewise intelligent causes, which pursue an ultimate end thro' all the different parts of their works. We may distinguish them

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by the nature of their productions, since the exact relation which all the parts bear to the principal end, is the characteristic of an intelligent cause. This just relation shines conspicuous through all the laws of sensation. Pleasure and pain equally contribute to maintain our preservation; the one serves to point out to us what is most agreeable to our nature, whilst the other makes us know what is prejudicial to us. There is a certain pleasing impression, which marks out such foods as are proper to be changed into our substance; whilst hunger and thirst put us in mind that perspiration and exercise make a considerable waste in our bodies, and how dangerous it would be to delay long the reparation of this loss.

loss. Let us suppose, for a moment, that we had no painful sensation to give us notice of our present or future evils ; we should then perceive, that the want of this pain would soon make way for death, who would arm himself for the destruction of all sorts of animals, and for this end would make use of pain as well as pleasure indiscriminately.

There are nerves extended thro' the whole of our body, which serve to inform us what is good, and what is hurtful to us. The painful sensation is in proportion to the force of what hurts the nerves ; so that, according to the greatness of the evil, we make so much the more haste to remove the cause, *and seek the remedy.*

It sometimes happens that pain does not precede our evils, but at once advances upon us with our ruin ; nothing then which surrounds us can retard their approach. It is with the laws of sensation as with those of motion. The laws of motion regulate the succession of those changes which happen in bodies, and sometimes bring rain upon rocks or barren lands : in the same manner, the laws of sensation regulate the succession of changes which happen in animated beings ; and those pains which appear to us of no use, are often-times necessary consequences which flow from the circumstances of our situation. But tho' these different laws may, in some particulars, appear to be of no use, yet this is a

less inconveniency than it would be to suppose them continually liable to change, since this allows no fixed principle capable of superintending the management of men or animals.

The design of these general laws is not to make all the individuals immortal ; 'tis only to preserve the different species. Now it is evident, that the laws of sensation, as well as motion, are perfectly calculated for this preservation. Those of motion, at all seasons, and in all places, furnish the various sorts of animals with whatever is useful or necessary for them. Those of sensation point out to them whatever is agreeable to their nature, and invite them to look out for such ; while, at the same time, they instruct

struct them in whatever is prejudicial, and oblige them to remove and keep at a distance every thing of this sort.

What depth of understanding must there be in the Author of nature, who, in a manner so simple, yet so full of variety, continually changes the scene of the universe, yet, in general, preserves it the same !

The laws of sensation not only conspire with the works of the whole universe in proclaiming that there is an intelligent cause ; but what's more, I affirm that they likewise prove to us the beneficence of this great governor of the world.

His bounty is made manifest by the care which he has taken, not

only to provide for us what is necessary, but likewise what is convenient and agreeable ; and this care of his shines forth in all the laws of sensation.

When my hand is benumbed with cold, and I happen to put it too near the fire, the exquisite pain which I feel, makes me draw it back immediately. In like manner, I am every hour indebted to such friendly alarms, for the preservation of some part or other of me.

But if I approach the fire at a moderate distance, then I feel an agreeable warmth ; and we may observe, that, in such impressions of objects, or exercises of our different faculties as are in any degree suited to prolong our existence, or raise our perfection, the Crea-

tor has bestowed pleasure with an open hand. To strengthen this observation, I appeal to those pleasing sensations which flow from painting, sculpture, architecture, and all the objects of sight. It is the same with music, dancing, poetry, eloquence, history, geometry, as well as all the sciences, the diversions, and employments of life; so it is too in the friendship, affection, and in short all the motions of the body, mind, and heart. Such is the extensive goodness of the Deity, that he seems to have been liberal, nay profuse of all those pleasures and agreeable sensations which were consistent with his divine wisdom.

I shall not here spend any time to confute that tenet of the Manicheans, who held that there are two deities, one of whom distributed pleasure, and the other pain. Mr Bayle seems only to have revived this doctrine, which has been exploded for so many ages; and to have made use of this system, as, in battle, a decayed house may serve for a shelter for a few minutes. He had not a sufficient turn for superstition, to make him believe two Deities. But however it may be, I shall only observe, that since the distribution of pleasure and pain equally answers the same unity of design, for this reason it is no proof of two intelligences necessarily at variance with each other.

C H A P.

C H A P. XI.

Of the pleasures which accompany our performance of the duties we owe to God.

IT has been said of Admiration, that she was the daughter of Ignorance ; but when we survey the works of nature, and behold such marks of art and dexterity, we cannot help being filled with admiration, which generally rises in proportion to our knowledge.

A Deity so infinitely intelligent ought to attract our admiration ; a being of such unbounded goodness ought surely to raise in us gratitude and engage our confidence and esteem.

Epicurus, by endeavouring to confute the existence of a God, thought he did well in attempting to disprove a power that seemed to be a enemy to our happiness. But why should we form this false idea of a being, who has not only given us different tastes, but at the same time surrounded us on all sides with agreeable sensations ; who has not only furnished us with variety of faculties, but has likewise contrived them in such a manner, that the exercise of all of them is accompanied with a pleasure which tends to our preservation ? Are the goods offered to us to be less esteemed, because they are the presents of a supreme and intelligent being ? Ought they not to be accounted rather more valuable, since they are the pledges of

of his goodness towards us? In short, when we consider the power, the wisdom, and goodness of God, ought we not patiently to submit to the afflictions with which he visits us, and contentedly to bear the loss of blessings which he thinks proper to deprive us of: nor ought we to murmur against the laws which he has prescribed to us.

Shall we pretend to rebel against a power that's infinite? No, let us not heighten our misfortunes by exerting our utmost but vain efforts against the hand of omnipotence.

We are placed in the universe, as in the garden of our first parents; and if we are forbid the use of one particular fruit, nevertheless let us with gratitude accept of others, which, of themselves, invite us to

partake of them. Let us enjoy what is offered us, without thinking ourselves unfortunate by what is refused. Desire is fed by hope, but dies when there is no possibility of attaining to its object. Is there any man in Europe who can be so unreasonable as to complain that he has not been seated on the throne of the Mogul? Let us not torment ourselves with fruitless desires, nor be uneasy, or out of humour about the want of any thing which is not a part of the happiness destined for us ; let us look upon the acquisition of such to be as impossible to be obtained as the kingdom of Asia. If we submit ourselves with humility to the almighty power of our Creator, then we have the inward satisfaction to know,

that,

that, if we were admitted into his councils, we should applaud the motives of his laws, and be highly delighted with the reasons of his conduct.

The universe seems to Epicurus and Spinoza to be nothing but a motley assemblage of works proceeding from a blind cause; but to men of virtue it is a magnificent temple, inhabited by a beneficent Deity, who has communicated to them a part of his design, and has displayed to them the wonderful works of his wisdom; who profusely bestows upon them whatever is necessary, useful, or agreeable; and to all the blessings which he has bestowed upon them, he has likewise added the prospect of a happiness as lasting as himself.

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Let us by no means wish then to throw off the duties which we owe to God: pleasure accompanies them; pleasure, I say, which is inseparably connected with every motion of admiration, gratitude, hope, or love, and, in this case, becomes still greater, because it is founded upon the most just and reasonable grounds.



C H A P. XII.

*Of the pleasure which accompanies
the performance of our duties to-
wards ourselves.*

THE duties prescribed by moral philosophy in regard to ourselves, may be reduced to these, to know how to set a just esteem upon the goods which are offered to us, and to bear our misfortunes with resolution.

There was a sect of philosophers who seemed to have an intention to extirpate all pleasures. Their schools resounded nothing else but this austere lesson, Abstain from pleasures. But why so? since Necessity herself, in a manner, obliges us to enjoy them,

either when we quench our thirst, or satisfy our hunger, or when we open our eyes or ears. We cannot help feeling pleasure in our employments, as well as amusements; in solitude, as well as society. Are we then to despise these blessings which are so connected with life? ought we not rather, with grateful hearts, to rejoice in the possession of them?

But farther, I affirm, that pleasure springs from the bosom of virtue. An inward satisfaction never fails to accompany every employment that's suited to our abilities and condition. Relaxations are most agreeable, when they are procured by labour, and used with moderation as not to create among all the descriptions

tions presented to us by history or tragedy, there are none more delightful than those in which the beauty of the soul shines forth with all its lustre. A friendship that arises from virtue, will excite the most exquisite pleasures; and amidst all the pleasing advantages which proceed from a friendly affection, there can be none of a higher degree than that which makes us fix our esteem upon the most deserving qualities of the person who is the object of our love, which reconciles our tastes, unites our views, and renders our interests mutual.

Virtue is far from excluding agreeable pleasures; she only takes pains to give the preference to those which are most worthy of it. Here a question of no small importance

occurs to us, a question which, long before the time of Epicurus or Plato, divided mankind into two different sects, Whether the pleasures of the senses be superior to those of the soul?

In order to determine this point, let us suppose them separated from each other, and thus carried to the utmost summit of their perfection. Let us suppose, that a being insensible of the pleasures of the mind, should taste those of the body throughout its whole duration ; and being destitute of all knowledge, remember nothing of those pleasures which it has felt, nor foresee any which it is to enjoy : thus being shut up as it were in its shell, all its happiness consists in a sort of deaf and blind sensation, which affects it only

only for the present moment. On the other hand, let us suppose that a man is insensible to all the pleasures of the senses, while at the same time he enjoys all those of the mind and heart ; that, in a life of solitude, history, geometry, and the polite arts, exhibit to his sight all the richness of their treasures, and, while he is in this retirement, continually give him fresh proofs of the force and extent of his mind : or, if he lives in society, that friendship and glory, the natural concomitants of virtue, continually furnish him with new instances of the grandeur and beauty of his soul, and by his strict adherence to the dictates of reason, that a secret satisfaction always reigns in his heart, which nothing can

disturb. Methinks there would be but very few men who have any notion of the pleasures of the mind and body, who, if they had these two different sorts of happiness placed before them, would, to use Socrates's expression, prefer the state of an oyster to that of a divinity.

The pleasures of the body are most lively when they are the remedies of pain. Is it not the degree of thirst which determines the degree of pleasure we feel in quenching it? Socrates, who in his comparisons considers more the truth of the resemblance, than the majesty of the image, compares these sensations to that of scratching any part which itches: an ~~as~~ goes before and accompanies.

nies them, and as soon as the pain vanishes, the pleasure is also annihilated; whereas most of the pleasures of the mind and soul are not adulterated by this impure mixture of pain.

Besides, all that's exquisite in sensual pleasure, is derived from the mind or soul; without their assistance, it soon cloys and grows insipid.

In fine, the pleasures of the body have nothing of duration, but in proportion as they borrow it from our wants; and as soon as they are supplied, they become principles of pain. The pleasures of the mind and soul are then greatly superior, had they even no other advantage than that of being better suited.

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suited to fill up the void spaces of
life.

But among all the different sorts of pleasures, whether they be of the mind or heart, to which must we give the preference? It appears to me, that the testimonies of all men, concur in giving the pre-eminence to those which flatter most our self-love. Whence comes it, that we are more offended at contempt than hatred? 'Tis because it gives us more pain to have our perfections called in question, than to be threatened with the loss of any other possession.

A comic writer among the Greeks has observed, that the proper measures for securing a prifoner were generally not followed:

Why,

Why, said he, might we not allow pleasure to guard him? Why do we not bind him in her fetters? Plautus and Ariosto have adopted this piece of pleasantry. But those poets must surely have had a very superficial knowledge of the human heart, if they really believed that their captive would not have broken his chains. In order to effect this, there would have been no occasion to display to his sight the whole lustre of glory; for as soon as he found himself to appear despicable in his prison, as soon as he found himself liable to the contempt of others, then he would have been alarmed, and would have endeavoured to throw off his yoke, and prefer honourable danger to shameful pleasure. For the truth

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The Theory of
ant truth; and tho' she has annexed a particular pleasure arising from the marks which others give us of their esteem, yet she has, at the same time, fixed a blemish on those who claim public praise as their due. Does she not seem here to be a little contradictory to herself? For why should she make it disgraceful to require esteem, while, at the same time, she seems to prompt us to seek for it by the pleasure which attends it? In this let us not blame the conduct of nature, but rather admire her wisdom; she informs us by the voice of our inward reflection, that public esteem is a sort of recompence due to virtue, but that it ought not to be the motive. To be over-fond of the esteem of others, is, in effect, a kind

of proof that we have not our own inward esteem. Let us then first seek the approbation of an upright conscience, which hatred or calumny cannot deprive us of, which will be some time or other followed by the esteem of others, and is always accompanied with the approbation of God himself.

Let us not allow ourselves to be dazzled by the flattery of a false judgment. Behold that man who appears so melancholy and dejected; he imagined that grandeur consisted in a numerous train of attendants; by this means he thought his being was aggrandized. A reverse of fortune forced him to retrench half his retinue: he is insensible to all other happiness which remains, and is become perfectly miserable

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miserable by the loss of what was
really useless to him. Turn your
eyes to that other person, who pos-
sesses so much wealth, and is ar-
rived to such a pitch of grandeur;
yet see what a fit of frenzy and
despair has seized him: This man
measured his happiness by the ten-
derness of a wife, or perhaps by
the favour of his prince; his dar-
ling pleasure has been snatched
from him, the loss of which has
made such a chasm in his heart,
that the horror of it has tainted all
the other blessings which surround
him.

It is true that these phantoms
of perfection, proceeding from an
imagination transported either by
ambition or love, may sometimes
use a transitory pleasure more
lively

lively than that soft and durable joy which accompanies reason; but this fleeting sensation is of the same nature with that which makes drinking more agreeable in a fever than in health: it supposes a distemper in the soul, from whence arises an uneasiness in the pursuit of the object of desire, disgust in the enjoyment, and despair in the privation.

"Tis not only in the external testimonies of perfection that we find a sort of happiness, since it also consists in the consciousness of possessing it.

But amidst all these agreeable enjoyments which offer themselves, are we entirely to give up ourselves to those which are attended with the greatest pleasure? No. The same sensations too often

repeated, will soon blunt the sensitive faculty ; loathing and distaste will issue forth from the very bosom of pleasure ; so that what a little before gave us the most exstatic joy, will become the object of our aversion. How then are we to defend ourselves against such formidable enemies ? We can do it in no other way but by diffusing a variety thro' all that employs our faculties ; for this will give an air of novelty to the objects of our taste. The pleasures of the mind and those of the body, rest and motion, solitude and company, relaxations and serious employments, all these acquire new charms by succeeding each other ; and their variety produces the same effect in life, as the difference of concords in *harmony*.

In our different faculties we have a hidden store of valuable seeds, which become dead if not properly nourished, but they spring up and flourish, if assisted by the culture of arts and sciences. The more these are brought to light, the more we are furnished with preservatives against the assaults of our passions, as well as expedients to make life agreeable.

A certain great poet, by way of allegory, has told us that Jupiter had opened at the foot of his throne two fountains, the one of pleasure, the other of pain; and according to his will, mixed these two liquors, and thus determined the happiness or misfortune of each man in proportion to the nature of the mixture. May we not likewise, with

some propriety, apply this fiction to the different kinds of agreeable sensations? The idea of our perfection, and the successive exercise of our different faculties, are two sources continually flowing with different pleasures. A wise and beneficent being mixes these precious liquors in equal portions in favour of the man of wisdom, and pours them out incessantly upon him.

Let us not then place our chief happiness in riches and grandeur. There is no state of life wherein it is not in our power to form a chain of agreeable sensations, by procuring to ourselves a series of virtuous exercises, which may keep our faculties in action without fatiguing them. *alone are happy in possessing*

possessing the gifts of fortune, who can be happy without the possession of them. In reality, that man enjoys true and solid happiness who confines his desires within the circle of real wants, and grasps at nothing out of his reach ; this is a sort of philosophy which will effectually secure him against all melancholy and uneasiness : but as soon as the human heart goes beyond these limits assigned by nature, it loses itself in an immense field, where fortune sports with it by the airy bewitching phantoms exhibited to it ; and when once things are brought to this situation, we shall be able to find no bounds sufficient to stop the rapidity of our desires..

Health,

Health, a keen appetite, and strength of body, seem to be the portion of indigence; besides, the pleasures of the mind, friendship and affection, tranquillity of soul, joy, and inward satisfaction, are oftener found in a middling station, than in the retinue of princes. What then are the chief advantages of wealth and grandeur? They consist in having our self-love flattered by the magnificent structure of our houses, the richness of our furniture and equipage, and the power we have of lording it over others. We may certainly be happy in these advantages; but we are greatly to be lamented if we stand in need of these deceitful marks of perfection. Methinks they are like perfumes or

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concerts; to enjoy them is agreeable, but it is the greatest misfortune not to be able to bear the want of them.

Wisdom not only banishes from us melancholy and chagrin, but also secures us against that pain which in good constitutions generally arises from excess; and when she cannot absolutely prevent it, she at least blunts the edge of its impression, which acquires strength in proportion as there is less courage to oppose it. A Grecian general, famous for having made one of the most glorious retreats *, assures us, that the same degree of fatigue is not so hard to the general as to the common soldier; the vanity of the former carries half the

* Xenophon.

burden, whilst the latter bears the whole upon his shoulders. The Indians, barbarians, and fanatics, have shewn a chearfulness in the midst of the most exquisite tortures, to such a degree have they got the mastery of their minds, as to be able to divert their attention from the sensation which gives them pain, and fix it upon some idea which flatters them. Is it impossible that reason and virtue should learn from ambition and prejudice, in the same manner, to weaken the impression of pain by agreeable diversions ?

C H A P.

C H A P. XIII.

*Of the pleasure which is annexed to
the performance of our duties to
our fellow-creatures.*

THERE are two species of maxims, in the observance of which the happiness of mankind is not a little interested: the former are, as it were, the fundamental laws of society; were these to be universally broke through, all men would be involved in one common misfortune; such are these which compose what is called the law of nations: do injury to no one, and fulfil the engagements you have entered into. It is unjust, and declarative of our enmity to mankind,

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mankind, to infringe these laws, unless when the interest of the public gives us a sanction to do so.

There are other maxims which are less the basis than the ornaments of society ; tho' they are not absolutely necessary to support it, yet they procure it all the perfection which it is susceptible of. Such are those which command us to succour others in distress, and contribute all that lies in our power to promote the happiness of our neighbours ; if we observe these rules, then we shall be beneficent, and, in a manner, become the tutelar deities of our fellow-creatures.

These different maxims are composed of this gospel precept, Love your as yourself ; that is,

is, be just and beneficent. This is what morality enjoins us to perform, and the theory of sensation advises us to the same.

The victims of injustice are not the only sufferers ; as a serpent it begins with tearing the person in whose bosom it has been harboured. It owes its birth to an immoderate desire of riches or honours, and produces uneasiness and discontent. If the unjust man should flatter himself that he may escape the vengeance of men, or the justice of God, yet surely this he must lament, that he has placed his perfection or happiness in such a fleeting possession of objects, which depend on the will of others, and lie at the disposal of capricious fortune.

Pride and interest not only subject our happiness to things without us, but also by waging a secret war on all around us, sow in our hearts the seeds of general hatred, which weaken or stifle those of benevolence and friendship. On the other hand, if we are free from those vicious passions, then we view other men in the same light as we do the heros of tragedy ; then the heart, framed by nature to love mankind, will be totally inclined to benevolence and friendship. Now if it is true that every degree of benevolence is a pleasure, that sorrow itself is accompanied with a secret satisfaction when it arises from benevolence, and that every effect of hatred and en-

vy is attended with pain, our happiness must be so much the more complete and solid, as the conduct of our life is calculated to inspire us with sentiments of love and benevolence, and to remove those of hatred and ill-will.

The habitual practice of justice and benevolence not only makes us happy by the motions excited in our heart, but still renders us more so, by the sentiments which are by this means inspired into those who keep us company.

The Author of nature, who has been so careful in furnishing us with such tastes as are suited to our preservation, has likewise implanted in us two different desires in regard to other men, that of being feared, and that of being loved.

In the state in which mankind were before the establishment of civil laws, it was perhaps more important, and consequently more agreeable to be feared than loved; because fear is a better defence than love against those whom ambition or interest have armed against us. Thus amongst sovereigns, who with respect to each other may be considered in this state, it is often less agreeable to be loved than dreaded by the neighbouring powers. The case is quite different with individuals. The laws are the guardians of their property, their honour, and their lives: what does it signify to them to be feared? but it is highly important to them, and consequently agreeable, to be

The love of others is often
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of great service to us, and is always accompanied with continued marks of esteem and friendship, which are generally more pleasing than the very services done to us. It has been said of praise, that it is, to the person to whom it is offered, the most pleasing of all music ; and we may venture to affirm, that there is nothing more agreeable to the mind than to be beloved.

It is by justice and benevolence, that we procure this agreeable satisfaction. Pride and injustice cause dislike ; if weak and impotent, they become the objects of contempt ; if joined to power, then they are hated by us. They aim at establishing happiness on the ruin of others, whereas virtue, by reconciling our

own happiness with that of others, makes our private advantage their common good. We may form some notion of this, by that interest which we cannot help having in favour of those virtuous persons produced in tragedy upon our theatres.

It is true, indeed, that the appearance of virtue may produce this effect, as well as virtue herself. But we may say of her what has been said of love; it is almost impossible to make the counterfeit pass current for any considerable time; the only way to appear just and benevolent is really to be so.

Let us suppose a man, who being hated by all his acquaintance, hates them equally in his turn. All the objects which are offered to his

light

fight will be offensive to him, all the motions excited in his heart will give him pain. Such we may conjecture to be the condition of those unhappy wretches, who, after death, are wholly devoted to hatred and injustice ; these have been their crimes in this world, the very practice of which has been their first punishment.

On the other hand, let us consider the just and benevolent man, who rejoices in the love and esteem of all who know him ; his life is one continued act of benevolence, and all the objects presented to him will be agreeable. The motions raised in his heart are so many pleasures.. Such certainly is the state of those happy mortals who are placed in the regions of bliss,
and

and whose minds are continually busied in the exercise of benevolence, which was their delight whilst here below on earth, and even then yielded them a sort of recompence for their virtue, by that satisfaction which attended the practice of it.

Nothing is more uncommon to be met with, than a man perfectly unjust, or perfectly benevolent. Betwixt these two extremes there is a vast ocean, where the greatest part of mankind fluctuate. The more our heart is given to hatred, the nearer we approach to complete misery; and the more we have of benevolence, the nearer we arrive at perfect happiness.

But it may be said, How can we avoid hating those who hurt

us in our interest or reputation? We must own an attempt of this nature to be difficult; yet what should we have a greater regard to than our happiness? and can we obtain it if we indulge hatred in our hearts? Let us only be as ingenuous to extirpate it from our breasts, as we are often in vindicating and maintaining it to be right.

May it not happen, that those whom we complain of, may have founded their conduct with respect to us upon very good reasons; why then should we hate them, since their behaviour has been such, as our own would have been in the like situation? Nay, even though they unjustly attack us, we ought only to lament their misfortune in harbouring within their breast

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sure principle of pain and uneasi-
ness. They ought to be consider-
ed as sick persons, who in a violent
fever imagine they shall cure them-
selves by wounding every one that
comes in their way. Let us guard
against their fury ; but let us not
punish ourselves, by giving way to
passions which may ruffle and di-
sturb the quiet of our souls.

Besides these sentiments of hu-
manity which we owe to mankind
in general, there are likewise par-
ticular duties arising from the several
stations wherein providence has plac-
ed us. They may be reduced to this
general branch, to behave to our su-
periors, equals, inferiors, and neigh-
bours, as we would they should do
unto us in the like circumstances. Let
this

this be the rule of our conduct ; and if we are careful strictly to fulfil these duties, this will be a means to procure us the esteem, as well as the affection and confidence of all our acquaintance, and will kindle in them the warmest sentiments of benevolence towards us.

Among all the duties which arise from the various connections in life, there are none which have more the appearance of being beyond human nature, than those of perfect friendship. It requires of us to give up our dearest interest in favour of our friend, and to regard him as the most valuable part of ourselves. However, there is no source more abounding in agreeable sensations, than the accomplish-

ment of these duties which appear so difficult ; and even to be sensible of having a capacity to perform them, is a very exquisite pleasure.

There have been some eminent authors, who have maintained, that in the intercourse of friendship, we have more to lose than we can gain ; 'tis, say they, a sort of extension of ourselves, which exposes us to misery, not only in our own persons, but in those of others also. To think in this manner, in my opinion, betrays a total ignorance of the power of love. Virtue is of such a nature, and the interest which true friends feel in what affects each other, is so peculiar, that it multiplies their joys, and diminishes their sorrows ; nay, even in
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the mutual sadness of friends there is diffused a sort of pleasing sensation, which they would not part with for the most lively pleasures.

But if it is true, that benevolence alone makes men happy; how comes it about, that the generality of mankind seem prone to injustice and hatred? The principal cause of this distraction is the false impression which riches and grandeur make upon us. By the delusive splendor, which often conceals a real misery, we often make an estimate of supreme felicity: and instead of exercising our faculties, and conducting ourselves towards others, in such a manner as to inspire us with sentiments which are accommodated to our nature, and suited to our happiness, we are

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impatient to obtain an unbounded
measure of things, which, in them-
selves, are not necessary, and are
only made so by our fantastical
way of thinking ; and we sacrifice
every thing that proves an obstacle
to these unlimited desires. 'Tis
not so with those nations, where an
equality of wealth and circum-
stances prevent the entrance of am-
bition and avarice ; in all their re-
lations in life, 'tis esteemed as a
popular quality among them, to be
beneficent to all whom they do not
look upon as their enemies.

C H A P.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the happiness annexed to virtue.

I Shall here bring into one view all the different sorts of pleasures which accompany virtue.

Sextus Empiricus gives us an extract of a performance of Crantor, which treats of the pre-eminence due to all the different kinds of happiness. This famous philosopher feigned, that, after the example of the goddesses who had submitted their beauty to the determination of Paris, in like manner the deities who preside over riches, pleasure, health, and virtue, presented themselves before the whole nation of the Greeks, when assembled

at the Olympic games, and desired them to assign each of them their rank, in proportion to the degree of influence which they had over the happiness of men. Riches made a parade with her magnificence, and endeavoured to dazzle the sight of the judges ; but Pleasure stepped forth, and represented, that the only use of riches was to procure us pleasure, and therefore she laid claim to the first place : Health at the same time advanced her plea, alledging, that without her all joy would soon be converted into sorrow. At last Virtue made her appearance, and ended the dispute, by plainly demonstrating to the Greeks, that if we overflowed ever so much with riches, or enjoyed ever so much pleasure and

and health, yet if we had not the assistance of wisdom and bravery, we should soon become the sport of our enemies. The first rank was thereupon adjudged to Virtue, the second to Health, the third to Pleasure, and the fourth to Riches.

But, in my opinion, it is too much degrading Virtue to make her principal business consist in being a guard to her rivals ; for we may find her pre-eminence upon much more noble titles. Riches, Pleasure, and Health, become evils when we know not how to make a proper use of them. Wisdom alone, to speak with propriety, deserves the name of goodness, since, by her means, misfortunes frequently become happiness; while, on the other hand, if she is not pre-

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those things which we account the greatest happiness, turn out quite the contrary. She removes from us all painful sensations, and excites in us those that are the most agreeable. Sorrow for what's past, repining at what is present, and anxiety for futurity, are the greatest scourges of the human race ; but Virtue defends us from them, by confining our desires to what is within our reach, by making them conformable to reason, subjecting them to the laws of our Creator, and placing our perfection not in the possession of wavering fleeting objects, but in the proper exercise of our faculties, such as are suited to our present condition. Spleen and discontent spread their infection even to the very throne ;

throne; but they dare not approach Wisdom, which adorns life with a succession of virtuous employments, and forms a chain of agreeable sensations. She even often wards off diseases from us, which are generally the fruits of intemperance. She does not debar us from the pleasures of the senses, but offers them to us in all their purity and innocence, and they become agreeable in proportion as we stand in need of them. The pleasures of the mind follow in her train, nor do they abandon her even in solitude and adversity..

Wherever the virtuous man turns his thoughts, upon God, mankind in general, or his friends and neighbours in particular, he per motives of secret joy. He

The Theory of
forms himself to the design of his Creator, lives worthy of the regard of all his friends and acquaintance, and would surely be loved and esteemed by all intelligent beings, if they were all able to see into the candor and honesty of his heart. He is entirely free from hatred, as well as fear, and lives in the continued exercise of benevolence; that is to say, in the enjoyment of the most agreeable sensations: in short, the satisfaction which accompanies an upright heart, is to the mind, as Solomon expresses it, a perpetual feast. And thus all the different kinds of agreeable sensations are united in favour of Wisdom, and being combined in proportions regulated by their vivacity, duration, and agreement, they form

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the most delicious of all harmonies.

But the greatest of all blessings, which the virtuous man enjoys here below, is at the hour of death, which throws others into despair, whereas it seems to him only as a passage into a more happy life.

The unjust man beholds death as a frightful spectre, which every moment approaches nearer and nearer to him, imbibers all his pleasures, gives a double edge to all his misfortunes, and threatens to deliver him up to a God who is the avenger of the innocent. The only thing which seems favourable to him in the prospect of death, is that it will plunge him into a state of annihilation; but this ground of hope is considerably weaker

the authority of revelation, by the inward consciousness of his own identity, and the idea of a just and all-powerful Diety.

It is not so with the virtuous man. Death brings him into the presence of a beneficent and intelligent Being, whose laws he has always regarded, and whose goodness he has often experienced.

If it is true that hope is in itself an agreeable sensation, and this in proportion to the greatness of the good which is the object of it, there cannot be upon earth a more delightful situation than that of a man, who feeling a present happiness in virtue, has in death a noble prospect of perfect felicity opened to him.

I have

I have been giving the picture of the wise man, when perhaps such a one does not exist in nature; but we shall be more and more happy in proportion as we resemble this portrait. There is in morals, as well as in arts, a certain idea of perfection which artists ought to endeavour after, though they can never hope to attain to it.

I need not dread the ridicule of those who pretend to give laws to their superiors, if after having pointed out the sources of happiness, I observe that they flow equally to empires and private persons. This is a speculation which too much interests the human species in general, to be forbidden to any one who has a mind to amuse himself with it.

A fatal prejudice seems to set sovereigns above the laws of strict equity, which are seemingly destined for no other end, than to serve as masks to conceal and disguise their ambitious views. How often have we seen states complain of a superior power for the violation of these laws, while, at the same time, they infringe them by their conduct to inferior powers. It is however certain, that in princes as well as in subjects, injustice may be compared to counterfeit money, which discovers real misery *.

Let us suppose a people to be perfectly unjust, we shall soon perceive them to be perfectly unhappy. Being the declared enemies of mankind they will be

* Anti-Machiavel.

equally miserable by the sensations which they raise in others, as by those which they feel in themselves: Being feared and hated by all their neighbours, they must likewise fear and hate them. It is not necessary that the neighbouring nations should take up arms for their defence. It is sufficient that each of the individuals guide their conduct by the maxims of the state, and accordingly make use of every method, tho' ever so detestable, to raise themselves upon the ruins of each other: then we shall have such a race of men revived, as formerly struck a terror into Cadmus, when they sprung out of the earth, and lived together for no other reason but to destroy each other.

Such a society of men could not subsist, nor does history furnish us with any example of this nature. It has been often observed, that robbers could not keep their societies, were they not to preserve a strict justice among themselves: there have indeed been nations who have been more addicted to injustice than others, yet they have been more unhappy in proportion as they were more unjust.

Let us not measure the happiness of a kingdom by its grandeur or power: these are only to be considered as ramparts, which are of use to defend a place against its enemies, but are not sufficient to constitute the happiness of its inhabitants. What state could shine with more lustre than that of

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the Romans, who met in their public places, at their pleasure disposed of the most distant kingdoms, and gave laws to the most powerful monarchs, but being at the height of injustice, soon arrived at the height of misery.

What they aimed at was to enslave the whole world; deserts, forests, even vast seas were not sufficient bulwarks against the ambition of that people, till at last all the neighbouring nations combined against the common enemy, and, in the space of a few ages, overturned a power which had the appearance of being able to subsist as long as the universe itself.

The leading men in this republic had indeed proved its most fatal enemies; almost all of them grasped at the dominion over their countrymen; and those who could not aspire so high, endeavoured at least to enrich themselves by the ruin of the provinces which were intrusted to their care.

This corruption of manners had equally infected all orders of the state, and this nation, governed by arbitrary princes, were always ready to sell their votes, their laws, and liberty, to the highest bidder.

An empire in such a situation as this, may have an external appearance of happiness, by the pageantry of particular persons, the pomp of their public ceremonies, and their numerous and magnificent armies;

but

but frightful misery lurks in the vitals of such a state, which is inwardly consumed by hatred, fear, faction, distraction, and all that train of evils which proceeds from an unlimited lust of power.

History furnishes us with too many instances of this sort; and if it is true that Diogenes, notwithstanding all the inquiries he had made, could find none but unjust men in Athens, we may despair of finding a virtuous people in the annals of mankind. Ambition has been the establisher of most kingdoms, and seems carefully to keep up her claim to that title. To this end she directs all her maxims, and for this purpose ennobles her customs.

If there is any nation whose distinguishing character is strict justice, we have good reason to think that we must not look for such among those who have made the greatest figure on the theatre of the world. We must rather expect to find such a people enjoying a secret and undisturbed happiness, remote from the bustling scenes of life, which they resign to those infatuated nations, who are actuated by violent ambition, and strive to aggrandize themselves by the ruin of their neighbours.

One of the most admirable descriptive writers of antiquity has given us the following account of such a virtuous and obscure people†.

† Tac. *De morib. German.* c. 35.

“ The

“ The Chaqui, says Tacitus, are
“ a very powerful and populous
“ nation: they aspire to be great
“ by no other means than justice:
“ their dispositions are naturally
“ turned to peace and quiet: they
“ cultivate their own lands with-
“ out forming any design of inva-
“ ding their neighbours territo-
“ ries: virtue is not in them the
“ effect of weakness; for they are
“ bound in infantry as well as ca-
“ valry, and as they have a deal of
“ humanity and good nature, they
“ have no less courage to oppose
“ their enemies.”

* “ Every one takes a pleasure
“ in entertaining even a stranger,
“ and giving him a share of his
“ provisions; and if he should

* C. 21. & 35. *De mor. Ger.*

“

“ short, he then conducts his guest
“ to the house of some neighbour,
“ who takes it as the greatest kind-
“ ness from his friend, who has
“ put it into his power to shew his
“ hospitality and friendship.”

There have been German states of a later date, who seem to have inherited by succession all the property of that people. We may be convinced of this by what has been said by a cotemporary historian, little inferior to Tacitus, either in the strength of his pencil or the justnes of his pictures. “ When there was any demand for a public expence, says Machiavel *, the senate demanded of every particular as a tax, a certain part of his revenue ; the method of

• *Discor. I. 5. c. 15.*

“ raising

“ raising this tax is very particu-
“ lar, the conscience of every per-
“ son is charged with it: and e-
“ very one, on the appointed day,
“ brings the sums assigned by law,
“ and the funds are always an-
“ swerable to the intentions of the
“ senate, and sufficient for the exi-
“ gencies of the state:”

This people, who were not cor-
rupted by luxury or poverty, did
not decline bearing a part in the
public burden, but looked upon
themselves as indispensably obli-
ged to contribute towards an ex-
pence which the public stood in
need of.

Such a corruption of morals pre-
vails at present, that there are but
few men who have virtue sufficient
to make the world believe the pos-
sibility.

Let us cross the seas, if it is necessary, and pass into a new world in quest of such a people as this. We could formerly have found such a one in the American isles which Columbus discovered. Herrera, in his first Decade, has particularly described the manners of the inhabitants at that time. It seems to be a description of the golden age; and this famous historian had his materials from the archives of the Spanish consul, who cannot be suspected of the least partiality in favour of the Indians.

At present Pensilvania, a colony on the continent of America, proposes to revive the virtues of the primitive Christians, and

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by the innocence of their manners alone have formed to themselves a defence, which has struck a religious awe into the wild Indians, who at the same time are not at all daunted at the bravery and martial exploits of the other Europeans.

In short, if we can give credit to the accounts given of Paraguay, it appears by them, that some of our zealous missionaries there have put into execution the glorious plan of Plato's republic.

All these different nations are hardly more than atoms on the surface of the earth; but if we may believe the Chinese, the greatest of all empires has been the most virtuous, and in the course of three dynasties, there was a succession of
princes

princes so full of justice and beneficence, that all the neighbouring nations courted it as a favour to be governed by their laws.

We shall at present endeavour to give a sketch of an empire perfectly virtuous; and in it imitate that painter who painted a *Venus*, by collecting all the different features which he could discern in the most celebrated beauties.

We must suppose then agriculture to flourish in this happy kingdom, under the shelter of peace; that all the arts, sciences, and commerce, meet with the greatest encouragement; by this means poverty and idleness will be banished, and full scope given to the genius and talents of mankind. It is necessary

necessary that the head of the state should cherish all the different orders as members, none of which can labour under the weight of want and misery, but the whole body must feel the fatal effects. We must suppose that strict justice is observed in fulfilling all treaties, establishing all laws, and in imposing all taxes and public expences. We may include, that all the neighbouring nations will be interested in the preservation of such a state, and will be ready to arm in its defence, tho' at the same time, independently of all foreign assistance, it is able to oppose its unjust invaders ; for this will be the greatest possible safeguard to so wealthy and populous a nation.

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We may say of such a perfect kingdom, what we formerly said of the complete sage, Perhaps, it never existed. This is the ideal perfection aimed at in politics. But however that may be, 'tis certain that we may measure the happiness of states by the resemblance which they bear to this model of their felicity.

But notwithstanding this plan of a happy government has not yet actually existed, yet there is no impossibility but it may.

C H A P. XV.

*An inquiry into what kinds of life
are most happy.*

THE greatest part of mankind make their happiness depend upon others ; even when they are at the height of grandeur, they often aim at being happy under the title of suppliants. It is almost impossible that those who have it in their power to determine their lot, should always gratify their desires. The heart of every man, to use a Cartesian expression, is a sort of vortex, the center of whose motions is its own private happiness. But if we expect that our happiness should become the

common center of all others, this would be desiring a perfect change in their nature, this would be as absurd as to consent that our happiness depends upon a miracle. Therefore let us suit ourselves in the best manner that's possible to our neighbours, but let us not expect to be truly happy, but by gratifying the dispositions peculiar to our nature. I call that a happy condition of life, in which the agreeable sensations are superior in number to those which are painful: they are divided into three different classes, according as the propensities of the body, the mind, or the heart, are predominant.

If we had an intention to bring together a set of men truly to be envied for their happiness, I believe

lieve it would be in vain for us to look for such in the highest stations of life; but we should find them amongst those who subsist by a moderate labour, and by this means earn a sufficient competency for themselves and their families. We might soon perceive that such mortals as these live most free from anxiety, uneasiness, and spleen, and inwardly possess a secret fund of joy, which discovers itself on all occasions. Their life is not so full of noise and shew, but it is more safe and quiet; and tho' there may be some pleasures which they are deprived of, yet they enjoy a great many more which those in a higher sphère of life are strangers to.

The impressions made on the body are less agreeable than those

made upon the mind. One kind of life will then be more agreeable, in proportion as it is attended with more exercise of the mind than labour of the body. What can be more pleasing than to be able to enjoy all seasons, all places, and nature in general? A happiness so exquisite as this has fallen to the lot only of a few extraordinary persons. It is a sort of sanctuary, the gates of which ignorance has shut up for several ages from the greatest part of mankind; she has blasted the flowers of knowledge in private men, while, at the same time, she has ennobled injustice in conquerors.

Since it is from the heart that the most agreeable sensations flow, hence we may conclude that to be

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the happiest sort of life where benevolence most prevails. Those whom fortune has been lavish to in her favours, cannot taste the true sweets of her bounty, unless they feel a benevolent disposition to serve the rest of mankind. Their true happiness is to be measured by the number of their fellow-creatures whom they make happy.

What can be equal to the happiness of that prince, who does not confine his benevolence within the narrow circle of courtiers and flatterers who surround him, but enlarges his views, and makes the influence of his bounty extend to all his subjects, in order to procure to them all the blessings of life ? He banishes misery from his state; he gives life to arts and sciences.

sciences, and makes trade flourish; he encourages men of genius and virtue. By this method he will make plenty reign through all dominions, which will tend more to increasing his revenues and multiplying his people, than the most extensive conquests do. The certainty of strengthening and augmenting his power by means which are infallible, the delightful thoughts of being the minister of the Deity in procuring happiness of mankind, the sight of a whole people made happy by his generosity, the pleasure of beholding so noble a scheme put into execution, in such a manner as not to be liable to become the sport of fortune, the continual succession of the most agreeable exercises of benevolence;

in short, all the objects of sight, all the ideas of the mind, and all the motions of the heart, conspire to make his state the most happy which human nature is capable of.

It is true, perhaps, in this train of virtuous sensations, there may not be any so keen and lively as those of a conqueror, whose ambition is flushed with victory. Yet the conqueror purchases this pleasure by his running the risk of becoming the most unhappy of all men, because he is more liable to have his taste depraved by the principles of hatred, as well as by trouble and anxiety.

C H A P. XIII.

Proofs that moral philosophy is within the reach of all men.

PHILOSOPHERS, and the greatest part of lawgivers, confine the vulgar to a profound ignorance: they imagine the only way to restrain them from vice is the fear of punishment. Plato himself, in his republic, where he advances the boldest notions, has not ventured to form a people virtuous by the strength of reason, but has invested the magistrate alone with the charge of moral duties. But what are the depths of this science which are set apart to such extraordinary persons? In my opinion they may be

be comprehended in a few maxims, which, in a manner, flow from the knowledge of sensations.

Let us respectfully submit ourselves to the laws of that beneficent intelligence to which we are necessarily subjected.

Let us, in a series of employments suited to our talents and condition, seek for the small portion of happiness which we may hope to attain in this lower world.

Let us not place our perfection in the possession of things which are out of our power.

Let us live with the rest of mankind in such a manner as we may carry in our heart the sentiments of benevolence towards them, and banish from our breast all hatred,

In order to make us perceive that our happiness depends upon the observance of these maxims, there is no occasion to mount up to the heavens above, or descend to the regions below; since we may every day meet with proofs as easily comprehended as the principles of the most common arts.

Need we be at any great pains to perceive, that our misfortunes will become more light, and our prosperity greater, by the idea of a just and bountiful Power, who is the grand dispenser of all events?

The countryman whom Horace mentions, might be sufficient to per-

persuade others, that they cannot be happy but by a kind of life that's suited to their condition and talents. A series of obscure employments procured him a happiness so little envied, that he never knew the value of it. Augustus's father-in-law made him a present of a piece of land, on condition that he would reside there, and content himself with the tranquillity he could there enjoy. His former gaiety was soon suspended by uneasiness, peevishness, and discontent. Take back your present, said he to his benefactor, and restore me to my former situation.

We find by Lucian's account, that the Athenians had been so well convinced by Socrates and his dis-

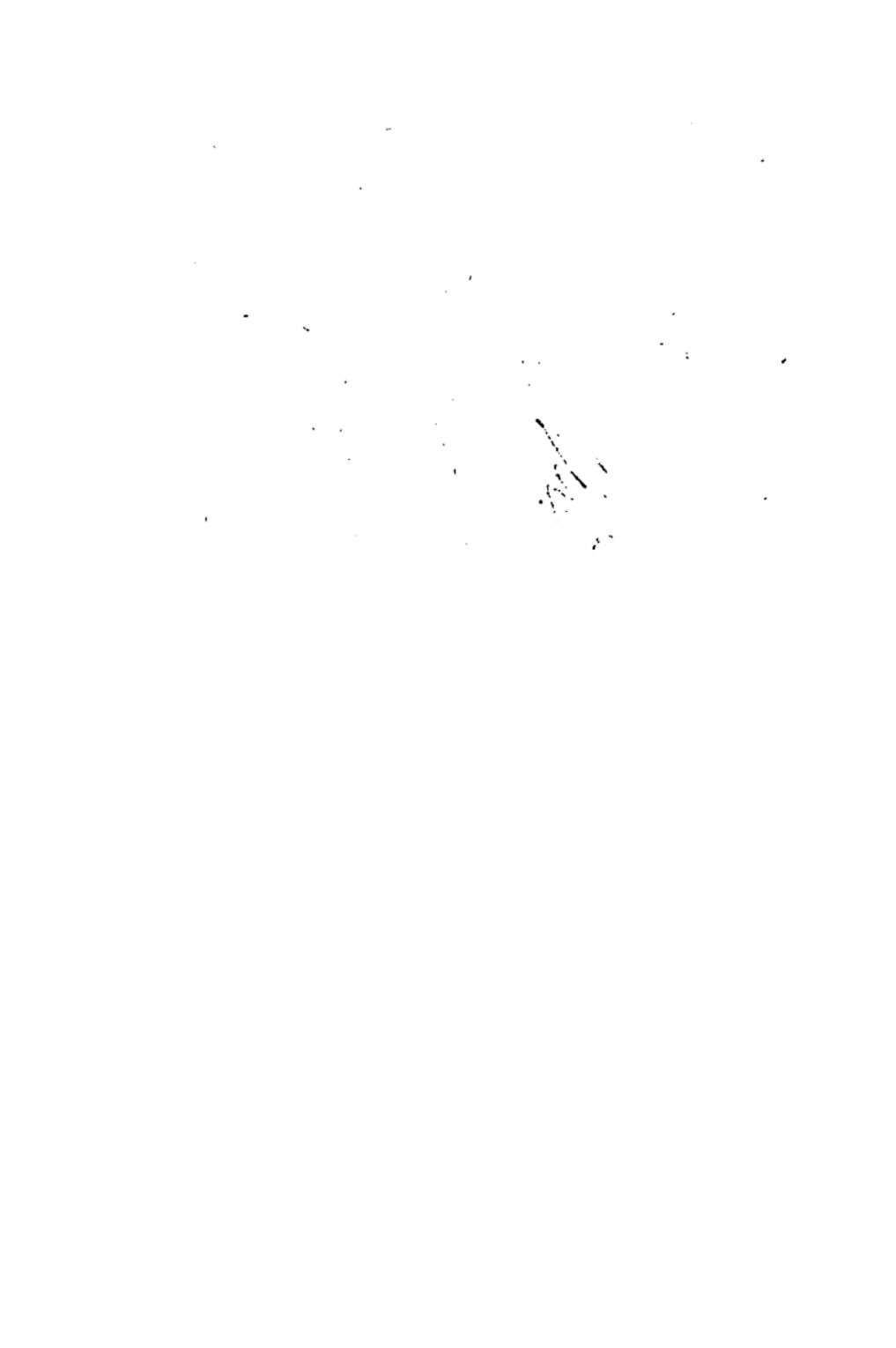
ciples, that they made themselves appear ridiculous by endeavouring to become famous by the possession of goods which were out of their power, that they heartily despised those who endeavoured to procure esteem by the magnificence or grandeur of their retinue.

In short, 'tis only necessary we should be capable of loving and hating, to be convinced that our lives will never be more happy than when we find our hearts warm with the sentiments of benevolence, and thorough strangers to the motions of hatred.

It is not then with moral philosophy, as it is with most other sciences, which seem only to give their oracles in deserts that are

are inaccessible to the bulk of mankind ; but there is no mystery here which she is not ready to disclose, to all those who are capable of the least degree of reflection.







A

DISSERTATION

UPON

HARMONY of STYLE.



NE of our best writers affirms, that the sources of harmony of style are not yet quite discovered.

However I am of opinion, that we may find them all in Cicero, and other ancient rhetoricians, and by their assistance, undertake

bring them to light. But in order to succeed therein, we must measure syllables, words, and periods. A fine study for men of nice and delicate tastes ! And will it not be a bold step to bring forth these grammatical obfervations from the obscure corners where they seem to be at present confined ? But why should we affect a delicacy which the greatest men of Rome and Athens were strangers to ? We find there have been consuls and emperors, crowned with victory, and at the summit of grandeur, who have not thought it unworthy of them to dive into the principles of an art, which is in a manner the foundation of all others, the bond which unites all men of genius, and which, under trifling appearances,

con-

conceals the fruitful sources of real pleasure. It is true, that ambition then gave a dignity to those inquiries, which contributed to procure a sway in popular assemblies by the charms of eloquence : but Philosophy will still add a greater dignity to such studies, since she will make use of them to discover to us, how far the Author of the laws of sensation has carried his benevolent care and attention to mankind.

By harmony of style, I understand the agreeable turn preserved in the various parts of a sentence ‡.

The most simple phrases are capable of receiving a sort of har-

‡ I do not here pretend to give a complete definition of harmony of style, but only propose to acquaint the reader with the subject of this dissertation.

mony.

We naturally love to present first our most interesting ideas; but this arrangement which is dictated by self-love, is quite different from that prescribed by the art of pleasing. The principal law which this art lays down, is to seem to forget themselves in favour of others; for it is in periods, as in tragedies and other productions of the liberal arts, where the parts are shewn in succession; the interest and pleasure of the hearer vanishes as soon as they are diminished. Therefore the most interesting ideas, the most sonorous expressions, and the longest

est.

est words, ought as much as possible to be placed last.

This rule, which ought to be strictly observed, when our design is to please or to affect, will admit some exception, when we intend to persuade or instruct. The rhetoricians advise us, if we are to make use of a weaker argument in conjunction with those that are more strong, that we should not begin with advancing any thing which may convey a notion of the weakness of our cause ; that the first argument should give a favourable prepossession, a weak one should be lost in the croud, and the last ought always to be the most striking. It is sometimes necessary too to observe this method in the arrangement of our ideas in

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period, so that we ought to give the first place to the most interesting idea, when it can throw any light upon the subject which we intend to clear up.

When the ideas are equally interesting, it is the length of the words, which ought as much as possible to determine their position. The ancient grammarians have made this observation, that when in any phrase there are words much longer than the rest, and consequently more difficult to retain, the best way will be to put them in the last place *; then they will have a greater influence on the me-

* In verbis observandum est, ne a majoribus minora discendat oratio; melius enim dicetur, Vir est optimus, quam vir optimus est. Diomed. l. 2. cap. De structura perfectæ orationis. See likewise Hermog. l. 1. & Harpocrat. 104.

mory. We may be convinced of the truth of this observation, by the ease with which children repeat the last parts of a discourse.

It may be observed here, that several monosyllables united, terminate a sentence well, because to the ear they appear no more than one word.

Such is the structure of the fibres subservient to hearing, that they act by the laws of this theory, even when the mind is unconscious of it. The author of the French prosody has remarked, that the syllables which are short in that language, become long at the end of a sentence. Our forefathers, as well as the Greeks and Romans, perceived it to be agreeable to the ear, that the last part of a phrase should

be

be the longest; for this reason they have refined a little, and diversified the pronunciation of the same word *. Sometimes it may happen, that the most interesting idea shall be contained in the shortest word; are we then to refuse, if I may so say, the place of honour due to it? or must we incumber the sentence with a useless weight? No surely, for we must always give up the sound for the sense. An author ought to look upon beauty of style in the same light as the wise man does the favours of fortune; he makes a proper use of them when offered to him, and if they fly from him he disdains to hunt after them.

* Thus *votre* which is short, *Je suis votre serviteur*, becomes long when it terminates a phrase, *Je suis le vôtre.*

Our expressions, though ranged according to the dignity of our ideas, may be so harsh and contrary to harmony, that, according to Cicero's remark, the mind may seem to give up its own interest, in order that the ear may be gratified. 'Tis chiefly in periods that eloquence appears to display all the magnificence of style.

I shall not here enter into a detail of those distinctions which rhetoricians have made among periods, and the different species of parts which compose them; nor shall I confine myself to their definitions, but shall make use of them only so far as they seem capable of contributing to give some light to the nature of harmony.

By a period I understand a sentence composed of several parts, which being separated from each other, still retain some sense, but not a complete one till they are at last united ; and in order to be pronounced with ease and gracefulness, each must be distinguished by a proper cadence of the voice ; these sentences may receive a beauty either from the proportion and symmetry of their parts, or from their measured gradation. We have the authority of Cicero, as well as several Grecian philosophers, to confirm us in this observation †.

”Twas

† Si membra in extremo breviora sunt, infringitur ille quasi verborum ambitus, sic enim has orationis conversiones Græci nominant : quare aut paria esse debent posteriora superioribus, ex-
tremæ

"Twas from harmonious proportion, as Quintilian remarks, that poetry first took its rise; from this too rhetoric has borrowed most of her figures, and though these ornaments appear ridiculous when far-fetched, yet the orator very often makes use of them to the greatest advantage. We have a very remarkable proof of this handed down to us in history. Gorgias the Sicilian † was the first who learned to exercise these parts of eloquence. He was sent to Athens as an ambassador by the Leontians his countrymen, to

trema primis, aut quod jam est melius et jucundius, longiora; atque haec quidem ab iis philosophis quos tu maxime diligis, Catule, dicta sunt, quod eo sepius testificor ut authoribus laudandis ineptiarum crimen effugiam. Cic. De orat. l. 3. c. 103. † Diod. l. 12.

implore assistance against a neighbouring power: he made a speech to the Athenians, wherein his expressions were so harmonious, his measures so musical, and his ideas ranged with so much art, that he perfectly struck them with admiration. He prevailed upon them more by the beauty of his figures, than the strength of his arguments, to carry on a war in Sicily in favour of his native country.

The gradation in the members of a period are still more agreeable than their symmetry: by this means art is better concealed, though, at the same time, it is more diversified; and as in the arrangement of expressions, and even of syllables, it is pleasing to the ear when the longest words are placed last, in

like

like manner, such a disposition of the members in a period will certainly yield a familiar pleasure: Here it may not be improper to produce some examples of this kind:

Les plaintes de ceux qui souffrent,
says *M. Flechier*,

Remplissent l'ame d'une tristesse importune.

I think it is evident, that every period formed on this model must be always agreeable.

Thus M. Bossuet, speaking of a queen of England, expresses himself in these words:

Issue de tant de Rois,
Son grand cœur surpassa sa naissance.

Here the ear is no less pleased with the cadence of the sound, than the mind with the grandeur of the idea.

Perhaps it may be said, that the name of periods cannot properly be assigned to these sentences, or others which I shall mention afterwards, nor that of members to the parts which form them; but all these denominations are indifferent: It is sufficient for my purpose, in tracing the sources of harmony, that the reader acknowledges that these different sentences are capable of being pronounced with more ease and gracefulness, when their different parts are distinguished by a proper cadence of the voice.

The explication of that which constitutes the number of periods

composed of two members, comprehends almost the whole theory of prose. It is generally the end of a sentence which determines its beauty ; the recent impression of the two last members seems to efface that of those that went before. However, though in periods of more than two members, measured gradations are pleasures which the ear does not require, yet it is not insensible to them, when they are offered to it, as is evinced by the following examples.

*Deja prenoit l'effor,
Pour se sauver vers les montagnes,
Cet Aigle, dont le vol hardi avoit
d'abord effrayé nos provinces. **

* M. Flechier in his account of Montecuculli.

So agreeable is the gradation of members in a period, that, upon its account, we may frequently reverse the common order of the expressions.

There are some more examples which I shall quote from Cicero. We need only look into his orations, to meet with abundance of the most perfect and harmonious periods. This great orator, in order to prove that Cecilius could not become the accuser of Verres, asks him if it would come well from him to say, I accuse him.

*Quicum questor fueram,
Quicum me fors consuetudoque ma-
jorum,
Quicum me deorum hominumque
judicium conjunxerat.*

The

The Roman people, says he in the same oration, has many pledges of my strict justice in the accusation of Verres:

Habet honorem quem petimus,

That was the Aedileship.

Habet spem quam propositam nobis habemus,

That was the Consulship.

Habet existimationem multo sudore, labore, vigiliisque collectam.

When the ideas, as well as the members in a period, rise by a sort of gradual progression, this forms a harmony at once grateful to the ear, and agreeable to the mind.

There are other periods which, tho' perfect in their kind, yet have two equal members, and one that is unequal.

If the unequal member is the least, then it is to be placed first.

Thus Cicero brings in Africa as an evidence of the valour of Pompey.

Testis est Africa

*Quæ magnis oppressa hostium co-
piis,*

*Eorum ipsorum sanguine redun-
davit.*

If the unequal member is the greatest, then it ought to end the period; as in that of Crassus, which Cicero has preserved, and which he has assured us charmed the whole Roman people:

Eripite nos ex miseriis,

Eripite nos ex faucibus eorum,

Quorum.

*Quorum crudelitas nostro sanguine
non potest expleri.*

If we should change the order of these periods, we might easily perceive, that by this means we should destroy their harmony.

There are periods, however, consisting of several members, which deviate from this general rule; and though the last member may be less than the preceding, yet it has so exact a proportion, that this supplies the want of order and progression.

M. Fenelon says, when he speaks of Calypso:

*Dans sa douleur
Elle se trouvoit malheureuse
D'être immortelle.*

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The first and last members are equal, and that which divides them is the double of each of them; the justness of these relations yields a pleasure to the ear, not inferior to that of a continued proportion.

The principle or rule, which, if observed, gives a beauty to expressions that are to be sounded together, must surely have a great influence in music, as well as in versification, and harmony of style. These are but different kinds of music, since the object of them all is to please by sounds; and in order to obtain this end, they must have recourse to one and the same common principle. Music, to afford a greater variety and resemblance in her compositions, sometimes makes use of the most whimsical

fical relations ; but those which she prefers most, are the unison, the octave, the fifth, &c. that is those of equality, from one to two, from two to three, &c. There are likewise some which in all languages are constantly made use of in versification ; and if in prose there is something agreeable in harmonious proportions used with discretion *, surely those must be most pleasing to the ear, which

• Poetæ quæstionem attulerunt, quidnam esset illud quo ipsi different ab oratoribus : numero maxime videbantur, &c. . . . nunc apud oratores numerus jam ipse increbruit : quidquid est enim quod sub aurium mensuram aliquam cadit, numerus vocatur. Orator. c. 37. & De oratore, l. 1. cap. 36.

Fieri potest ut non plane par sit numerus syllabarum, et tamen esse videatur : si una aut etiam altera syllaba, membrum alterum est brevius. L. 3. ad Herennium, c. 175.

are as easy to be retained as harmony, and have always less the appearance of stiffness and affectation. Versification and music do not render these proportions agreeable, because they make use of them, but they love to make use of them, because they are agreeable ; and when they are brought in so as to seem easy and natural, they answer the end proposed, and retain all that beauty which nature has annexed to them.

We may then perceive the truth of what Cicero says, that prose has its measures as well as poetry, and the only thing which distinguishes it, is its not being tied up to a particular number of syllables, but enjoying the liberty to make use of more or less at pleasure.

These

These measures may, no doubt, be expressed by numbers, for otherwise they could not be called measures.

They may be expressed in a manner that makes them easy to be comprehended and retained, because they please the ear, and are suited to the memory.

In short, the measures in prose are so extensive and full of variety, that they may appear quite natural, and all art be concealed; for tho' a flow of periods visibly measured, may charm in poetry, yet they would appear shocking in prose: the business of a poet is as much to please the ear as touch the heart; whereas the orator ought to address himself to the mind, and

should seem to have no other design but that alone ; however these embellishments of rhetoric cannot but please, if they are natural, and adapted to the subject, whereas they'll be despised if they appear laboured and far-fetched. Besides, this harmony which is formed by the relation of long and short words, which was peculiar to the Greek and Roman languages, there is likewise another which may be applied to all languages in the world, and which is produced by ranging the different members of a period according to their lengths.

But perhaps there may be some men who are quite insensible to this sort of music, and therefore deny that there is any such sensation, because

because nature has refused it to themselves. How shall we be able to undeceive them ? Or how shall we to a blind man prove the beauty of colours ? Nevertheless let us try what we can do, let us endeavour to demonstrate that the periods in every language may acquire a harmony by the proper disposition of their members.

Whatever is presented to us, is capable of being made agreeable, when its parts are susceptible of proportions easy to comprehend, and its structure formed in such a manner as may answer the end proposed. This principle is incontestable, and proved to be so by the practice of all arts which are designed to please the mind. But the

members of a period are capable of receiving a proportion easy to be comprehended, because they are separated from each other at a sensible distance, and may be made short or long at our pleasure. In like manner they are susceptible of a relation which may answer the end proposed by them. The object aimed at by discourse is to imprint itself on the memory; when the members of a period are equal, this fixes them in the mind, and keeps them linked together, and if they are unequal, the most advantageous way of ranging them will be to give the last places to the longest members, as being the most difficult to retain. Hence it is evident, that there may be a measured prose

prose in all languages, because there are none, where the periods are not capable of pleasing the ear, either by the proportion of the members, or their harmonious progression.

But here it may be said, Must a writer then who is employed in the most important subjects, take a pair of scales in his hand, and weigh each word and member of a period? If he was to follow after such trifling ornaments, would not this take away a good deal from the strength of the thought, and the dignity of the sentiment? A man can hardly help thinking so. However let us turn our eyes towards Cicero; tho' he seems to be Reason's interpreter, and makes her speak with the greatest

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greatest force and energy of expression, yet in all his numerous works, there is hardly to be found one sentence which does not seem to have all the harmony it was capable of receiving. Can we believe that this great man, who was so conversant with the sublimest parts of philosophy, and so much engaged in the weighty affairs of the state, would employ any considerable part of his time and labour upon childish trifles? Not certainly; but he was born with a genius and an exquisite taste, was a perfect master of his own language, understood all the principles of harmony, and always had a perfect knowledge of the subject which he undertook to handle. The periods,

riods naturally presented themselves to him, as well as the most proper ideas, sentiments, and expressions ; and all those who are born with the same talents, and have cultivated them with the same care, will reap the like advantages. If the strict and unalterable numbers of poetry, are so far from being troublesome to poets, that they rather aid and assist them, we may infer from thence, that the sentiments and thoughts in prose cannot but be elevated by a harmony that's more full of variety, and less tied up to the strictness of laws.

This matter may be examined into much further than I have done *. For I have aimed at no-

* See the Abbé Batteux in his *Cours de Belles Lettres, Tome 3.*

thing

thing more than to trace out the first principles. But before I finish this inquiry, I shall endeavour to canvass an opinion of M. de la Motte. " There are some persons, says he, who deny the orators the use of numbers, which they think belong only to poets. But what a whimsical conceit is this, that the same things which are highly offensive in prose, should yet please in poetry? Is it possible that the ear can have two contrary sensations from the same order of sounds? Thus, these numbers cannot, in reality, be offensive, and it is nothing but meer whim which pretends to exclude them from prose."

These

These persons whom M. de la Motte calls whimsical in their taste, are found in all nations who have cultivated eloquence. And can we imagine that mankind in general would be so far influenced by caprice, that they should, in opposition to nature, conspire to form a disagreeable sensation out of nothing? Instead of refusing to acquiesce in this universal taste, let us rather endeavour to trace out the cause of this certain fact.

Those who have studied the theory of music, have believed, that by the proportions which regulate the harmony of concord, the fourth ought to be more agreeable than it is; but they have pretended, that the relation which forms this fourth,

fourth, is of such of nature that it brings in the idea of the fifth, which comes so close upon that of the fourth that it quite effaces, and makes it in some measure disappear. May it not be nearly the same with a verse, which is part of a period? May it not in some degree be harsh, because it recalls to the mind a harmony superior to that of prose? All the parts of the whole ought to have their peculiar beauties, and be disposed in such a manner that they may appear harmonious, and not be effaced by each other; a florid expression will appear a deformity in a simple style, and the case appears to be the same, in respect to the ear, when a verse makes part of a period.

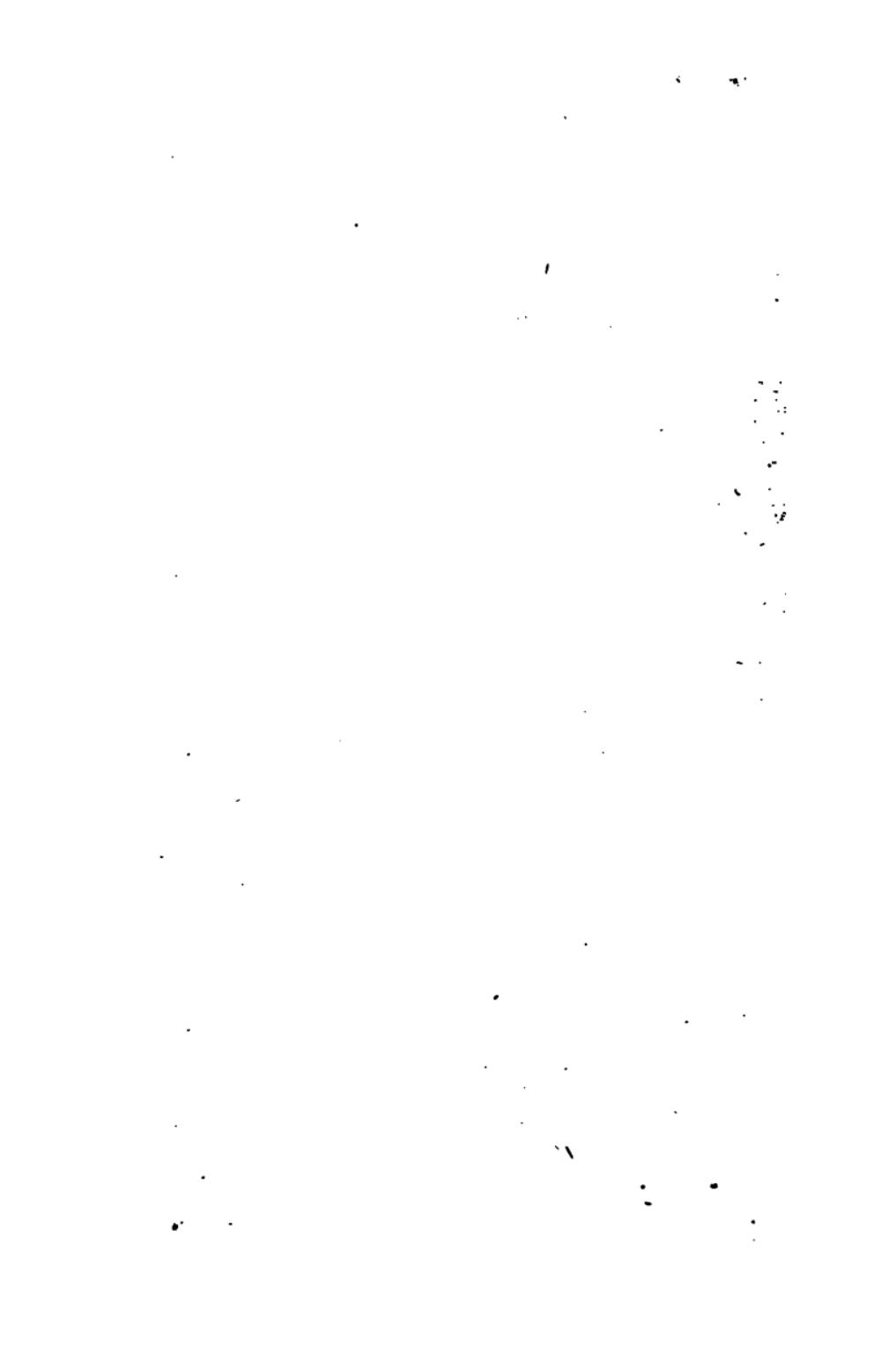
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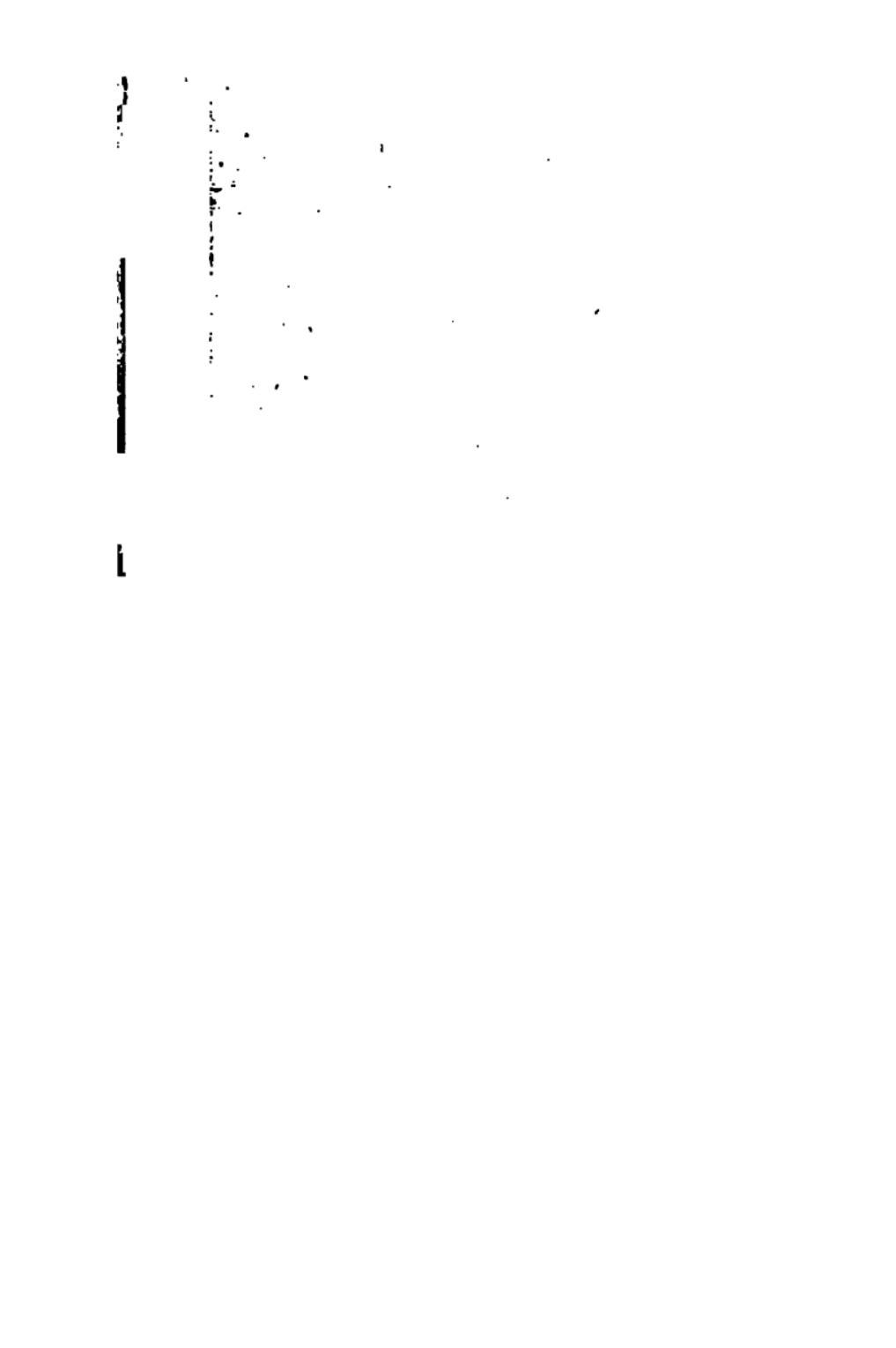
But how comes it that verses quoted in prose produce so agreeable an effect? Because they are detached parts, which are pronounced in a different manner, and to which we can expect nothing of the like harmony to succeed. If any one in a plain dress should show a rich stuff, this would not in the least be offensive to the sight; on the contrary it would be very much so, if he was, by way of variety, to add a piece of it to his coat. Besides, such a variety would appear the more deformed, because it unites the most disproportioned objects. However we must allow that the harmony of versification is not so greatly superior to that of periods, but frequently verses are allowed to pass in prose, without being taken for

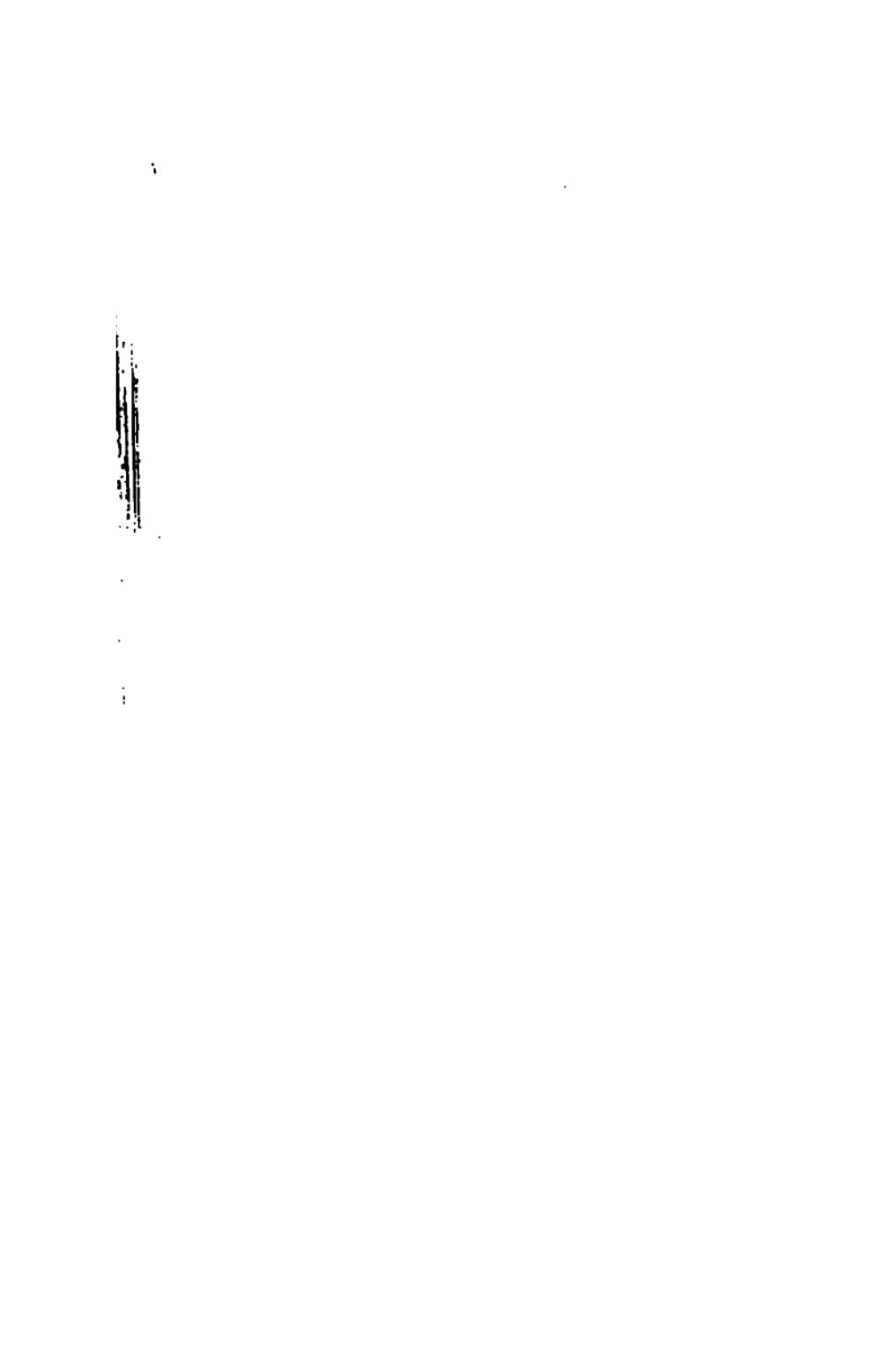
for very considerable deformities; they are looked upon to be such slight imperfections, that Isocrates, Cicero, and the very best writers, chose to let them remain, rather than sacrifice a happy expression..

F I N I S.











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